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AUTHOR	Whitebook, Marcy; Almaraz, Mirella; Jo-Yung, Joon; Sakai, Laura; Boots, Shelley Waters; Voisin, Irene; Young, Marci; Burton, Alice; Duff, Brian; Laverty, Kassin; Bellm, Dan; Jay, E. Deborah; Krishnaswamy, Nandini; Kipnis, Fran
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ABSTRACT

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care as a service for families and as an employment setting for workers in California is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. On this premise, a study examined licensed family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, and wages and benefits in eight northern California counties to contribute to the identification of more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. Data were collected through interviews with licensed family child care providers and their assistants conducted in Spring and Summer of 2001. This document compiles the resulting eight separate reports on the findings for the counties of Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Benito. Each report describes the child care staffing shortage in California, outlines the state requirements for licensed family child care, describes the county context, presents the study methodology, and details findings in the following areas: (1) characteristics of children served and hours of operation; (2) providers' personal characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, educational level, and marital status; (3) career preparation and continuing education, including training in early childhood education and business; (4) career longevity; (5) economic status, including income level, self-sufficiency status, home ownership, retirement savings, and health

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insurance; and (6) the use of family child care assistants and substitutes. Conclusions relate county findings to those found statewide. Each report contains references. (KB)

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Center for the Child Care Workforce
A Project of the American Federation of Teachers Educational Foundation

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California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Alameda County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns Alameda County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

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Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related, college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to increase the training and retention of child

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care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in Alameda County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.)

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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Alameda County

Alameda County, home to some of the fastest-growing cities in the Bay Area, is an ethnically and economically diverse community, with the majority of jobs in the technology, manufacturing and services sectors (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a 13 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to nearly 1.5 million people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 59 percent of the 281,523 children under 14 have working parents;[1]
- 54 percent of the almost 120,000 children 0-5 have working parents;[1]
- 18 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 22 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

In response to the growing demand, the number of spaces in family child care homes has grown significantly in recent years in some parts of the county. Between 1998 and 2000, however, the actual number of homes decreased by approximately 9 percent. Seventy-two percent of requests to resource and referral agencies by parents for child care are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To improve the quality of care and to offer providers incentives to stay in the field, the Alameda County Children and Families Commission has contracted with each of the county's three resource and referral agencies, which have hired Career Advocates to help providers take advantage of opportunities to increase their skills and education. The Commission has also contracted with the four community colleges in the county that have early childhood education departments, to hire staff to develop resources to meet the needs of early childhood education students. The county's Child Development Corps program provides stipends for nearly 2,000 caregivers in exchange for obtaining additional training, an effort that has boosted attendance at local workshops and classes. Classes for prospective and current providers are offered in several languages in addition to English, in response to the diversity of the provider and parent population.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agencies, 1,912 homes comprised the total population of licensed family child care providers in Alameda County as of spring, 2001. Originally, we hoped to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the licensed home-based population. But due to the size of the provider population and the related costs of data collection, we instead randomly selected a sample or subset of the population to survey.

Random sampling is the best way to obtain a sample that is representative of the entire population, and is a process that insures that each provider has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of a population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (19 percent of the county provider population; n=370), and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample

results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 4.6 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 5.58 percent for small-home providers and 8 percent for large-home providers.

In order to insure a sufficient sample size, we randomly selected 600 providers (31 percent of the population of providers in the county) for possible inclusion in the study. Of these, 370 providers (62 percent of the 600) participated, representing 19 percent of all licensed providers in Alameda County. Small homes comprised two-thirds (68 percent) of the sample (n=250), and large homes (32 percent or n=120) comprised the balance of the sample, closely representing the distribution of large and small homes in the county population of providers. All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension.

See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes;

Table 1. Alameda County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
Alameda County licensed homes	1,912	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample	600	31.0	100.0
Completed interview	370	19.0	62.0
Refused to participate	83		13.8
Out of business	30		5.0
Communication barrier	8		1.3
Unresolved number*	67		11.2
Unavailable, no contact made	8		1.3
Did not complete	32		5.3
Other	2		0.3

* "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. Alameda County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers were taking care of any children with disabilities or special needs, and whether they would like additional training in this area.

Data Collection

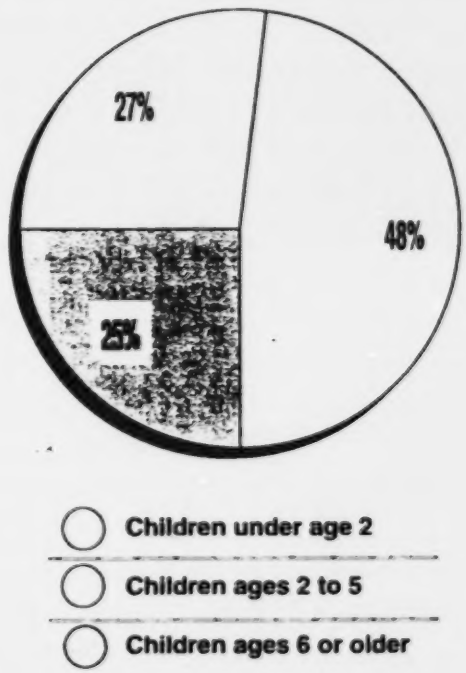
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back family child care providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Ninety-eight percent (n=362) of the interviews were completed in English, and two percent were completed in Spanish (n=8). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 370 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for nearly three thousand (2,907) children, approximately half of whom (52 percent; n= 1,511) were cared for in large homes, and the remainder of whom (48 percent; n= 1,396) were cared for in small homes. As indicated in Figure 1, three-quarters of the children (75 percent; n= 2,151) were age 5 years or younger. Approximately half of the children in home-based care were between the ages of 2 and 5, while the remainder were divided somewhat evenly between infants/toddlers and school-age children.

Figure 1. Alameda County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



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Providers, however, most often care for mixed-age groups. Seventy-nine percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 87 percent were paid to care for children ages two to five, and 55 percent were paid to care for school-age children. Fifteen percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 15 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 32 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[i]

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). The reasons for this are not clear to us, because we were not able to ask providers why they typically cared for fewer than the permitted number of children. This finding suggests, however, that the licensed capacity in the county was somewhat larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 18,902 slots in Alameda County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 16,608 children enrolled in licensed home care. This estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and of the distribution of small and large family child care homes in the county.

One-quarter of providers reported taking care of at least one child with a disability or special emotional or physical health need. Large-home providers (35 percent) were more likely to report caring for children with special needs than were small-home providers (20 percent).[ii] Large-home providers also reported more interest than small-home providers in receiving training or support to provide for the care and development of children with disabilities or special health needs.[iii]

The majority of providers worked long hours. Fifty-two hours per week was the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Fewer than 10 percent (8.6 percent) worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only five percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Twelve percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, more than one-third of providers (36 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. One quarter of the sample reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more

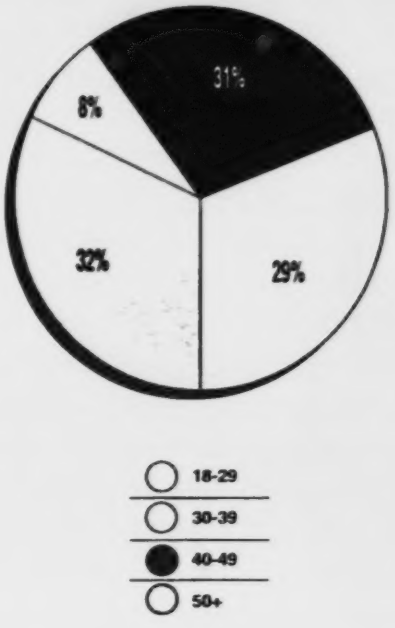
Table 2. Alameda County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared For Weekly By Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=250)	8	7.04	0.94	1.84	2.69	1.57
Large-Home Providers (n=120)	14	12.23	0.67	2.76	5.96	2.84

time each week preparing (15 hours on average) and caring for children (55 hours on average) than did small-home providers (12 hours preparation time and 51 hours of direct care of children on average).[iv]

A substantial number of licensed providers in Alameda County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Forty-three percent of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly-funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (58 percent) were more likely to serve families who received publicly-funded vouchers than were small-home providers (36 percent).[v] More than half of all providers (62 percent) participated in the federally-funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (82 percent) were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (53 percent).[vi]

Figure 2. Alameda County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



Personal Characteristics of Providers[3]

Family child care providers in Alameda County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only six of the providers interviewed for this study (fewer than 2 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 45 (see Figure 2).

Ninety-one percent of respondents provided information about their ethnicity. Although Whites comprised the largest subgroup of providers (39 percent), the majority were women of color. As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the population included a higher percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the adult population in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census), but a lower percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the child population as a whole. In particular, the percentage of Asian American and Latino providers in the county is small in comparison with the child population of these ethnic groups. Further, large-home providers were more likely to be people of color than were small-home providers, as indicated in Figure 4.[vii] There were no differences in educational levels achieved between white providers and providers of color.

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Thirty-five percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 98 percent and Spanish for 2 percent of the interviews. Eighteen percent of small-home providers and 23 percent of large-home providers were bilingual in Spanish and English. According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census,

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Figure 3a. Alameda County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

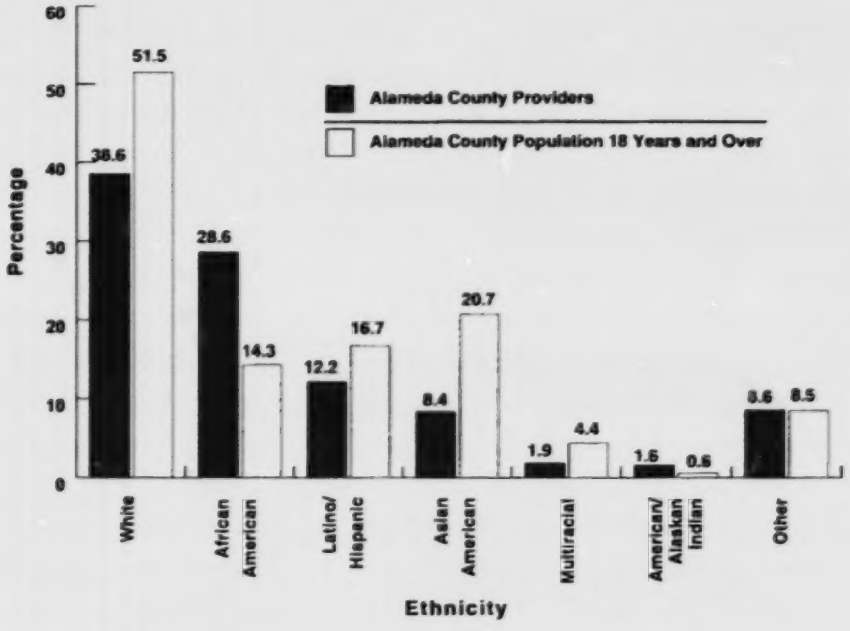


Figure 3b. Alameda County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

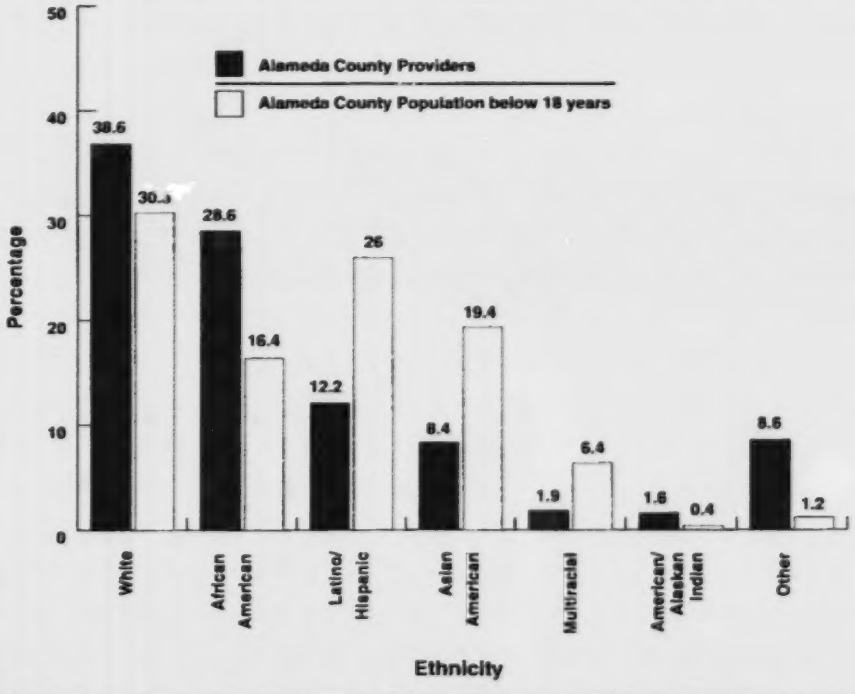


Figure 4. Alameda County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers in Large- and Small-Homes

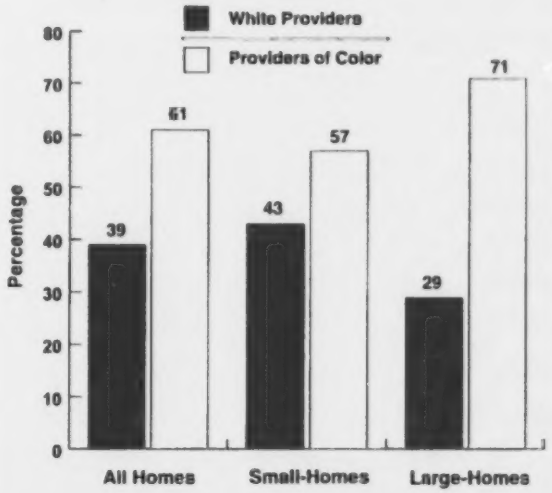
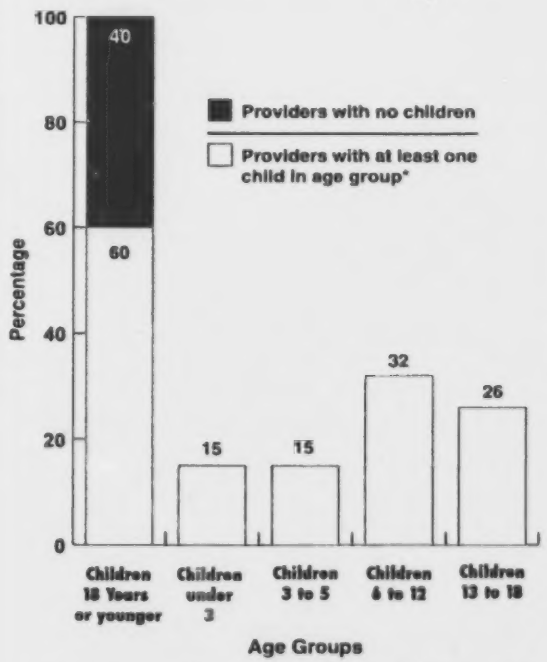


Figure 5. Alameda County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentages add up to more than 100, since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

36 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 14 percent are fluent in Spanish. Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog were among other languages spoken by Alameda County providers. Ninety-eight percent of providers spoke to children in English. Eleven percent spoke to children in Spanish and four percent spoke to children in another language. Providers who were not fluent in English and/or Spanish could not be interviewed, but it is likely that they speak to children in their care in their native language. In Alameda County, there are a sizeable number of limited-English-speaking and/or monolingual providers from China who speak Cantonese or Mandarin, and from Iran and other Central Asian countries who speak Farsi.

Approximately two-thirds of the providers (67 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Sixty percent of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (37 percent) or two children (35 percent). Approximately one-third of the providers were parents or guardians of children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 5. Forty-eight percent of single providers were parents, and 45 percent had children five years old or younger. Providers operating large homes were more likely to be parents or guardians to children over the age of 12 than were small-home providers.[viii]

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

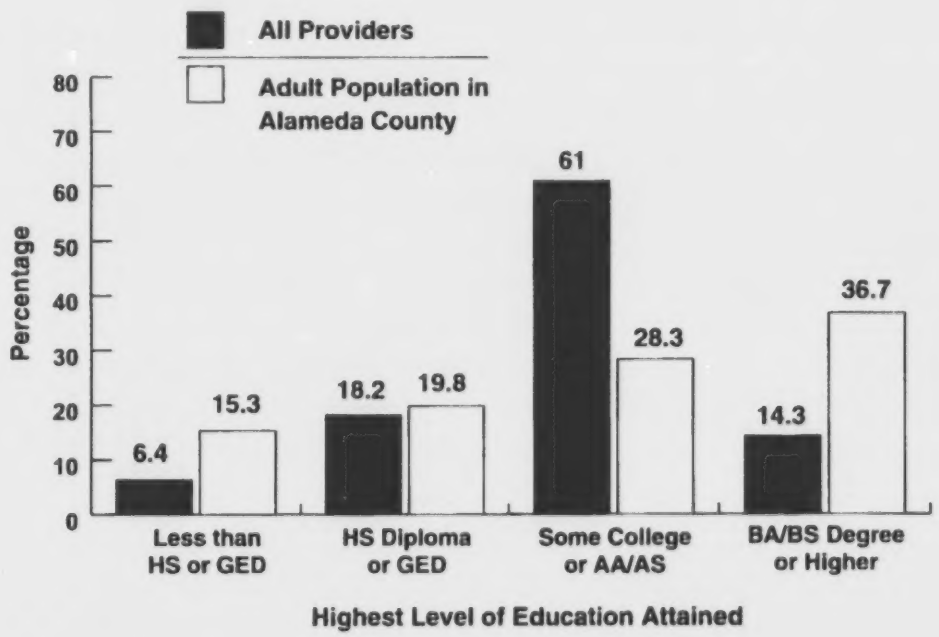
To become licensed, prospective family child care providers are required by the State of California to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo

a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Seventy-five percent of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Providers in Alameda County had completed high school or GED (94 percent) and some college or an associate's degree (61 percent) at higher rates than the adult population in the county (85 percent for high school, and 28 percent for some college or an associate's degree [Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census]). (See Figure 6).

Table 3. Alameda County: Highest Level of Education Completed by Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	6.4	23
HS Diploma or GED	18.2	65
Some college	49.0	175
AA/AS degree	12.0	43
BA/BS degree	10.4	37
MA/MS degree	3.1	11
Ph.D.	0.8	3
Total	**100.0**	**357**

Figure 6. Alameda County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County



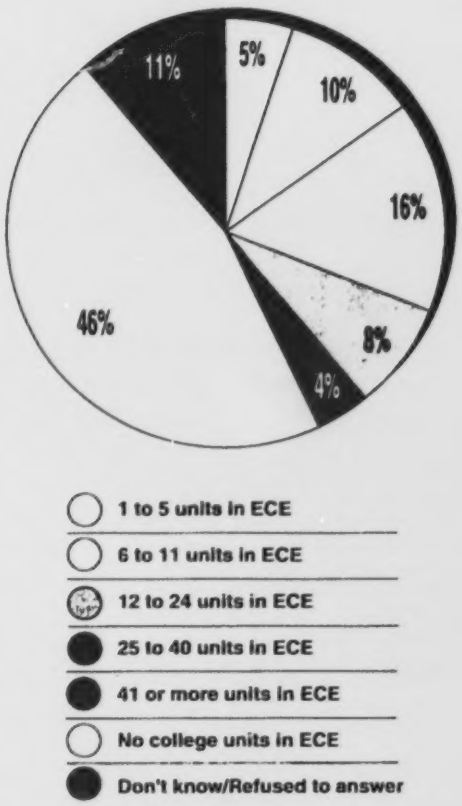
Approximately 14 percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher, compared to 37 percent of adults in the county as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were as likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in the county.

Among all providers, 55 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. Large-home providers were more likely to have taken a college course in early childhood education or child development than were small-home providers.[ix] As indicated in Figures 7a, b and c, of all providers:

- large-home child care providers were likely to have completed more units of college credit than small-home providers;[x]
- approximately three quarters of all providers (60.3 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- slightly less than one-fifth of all providers (16.5 percent) had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level; only 46 providers (12.4 percent) had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 75 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 70 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the 24 providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, two-thirds of those operating small homes and three-quarters of those operating large homes had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers (n=370), only five percent (n=17) had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Six providers (1.5 percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Six percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year.

Figure 7a. Alameda County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers



Many providers in Alameda County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that was not college-credit-bearing. For example, 59 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 52 percent reported

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Figure 7b. Alameda County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

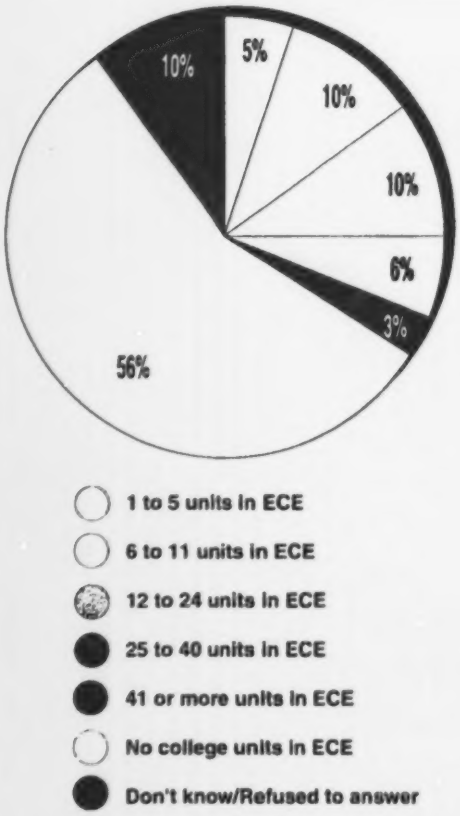
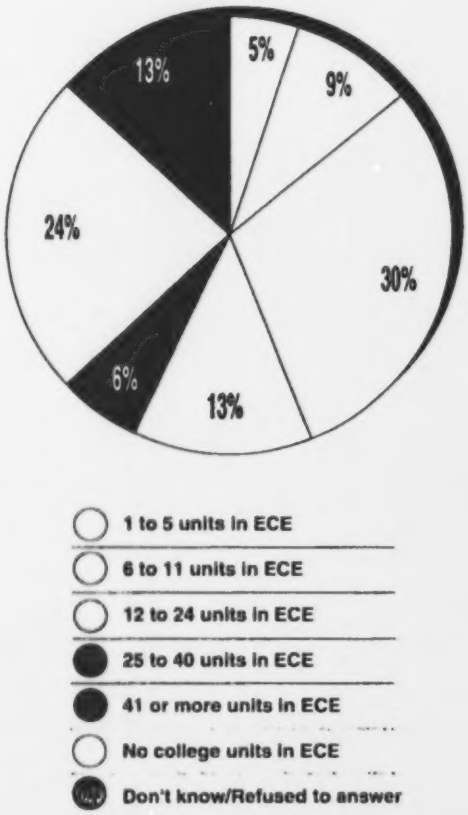


Figure 7c. Alameda County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



engaging in 20 hours or more of training. Fifty-seven percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with fifty percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Thirty-three percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in Alameda County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 31 of the 370 providers (8 percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Forty providers (11 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

Family child care providers in Alameda County are eligible to participate in the Child Development Corps, a professional development program that provides monetary rewards for educational attainment and tenure in the field to those working with young children. The program had been in operation for more than a year at the time the survey was conducted. Only 33 percent of the

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providers in the sample were familiar with the program, and of those, 37 percent (or 12 percent of the total sample) were current participants. Eleven percent had applied but were not currently participating. Large-home providers were more likely than small-home providers to participate in the program.[xi] Providers with higher levels of formal education were more likely to have heard of the Child Development Corps.[xii] Providers who were Child Development Corps stipend recipients had completed more early childhood education units (24 units on average) than providers who did not participate in the Corps (8 units on average).[xiii] There were no differences with respect to net income from child care between providers who participated in the Child Development Corps and those who did not.

Finally, there were no differences with respect to educational level between providers who received public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

Alameda County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 8.76 years in their home businesses; only 6.5 percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (7.25 years) than large-home providers (11.9 years).[xiv] Small-home providers (9.6 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (0) to have been operating a child care business for a year or less.[xv] White providers averaged greater tenure (10.2 years) than providers of color (7.8 years).[xvi] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure than those who rented their homes.[xvii] Tenure was also related to earnings from child care; those with ten years or more experience in family child care earned significantly more than those with five to ten years of experience, who, in turn, earned significantly more from their child care work than those with 1-5 years experience. The latter earned more than those with less than one year of experience.[xviii]

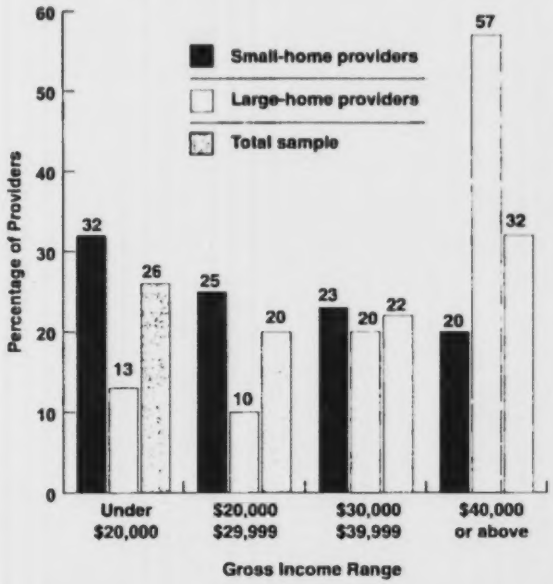
Economic status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or gross earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $25,000 to $29,999 per year, while large-home providers reported higher average gross earnings ranging from $40,000-44,999 (see Figure 8).[xix] Approximately a quarter of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year. Almost one-third reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business. The average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $30,000 and $34,999.

Net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred to operate child care businesses in a home, were also lower for small-home providers than for large-home providers.[xx] Only around half of the sample provided information about net income. Small-home providers reported average net earnings of $8,363, compared to $17,489 for large-home providers. Starting salaries for K-12 teachers in Alameda, who typically have more education but who work a much shorter day and year, averaged $30,469 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in Alameda County were $54,644 and high-end earnings were $80,944.

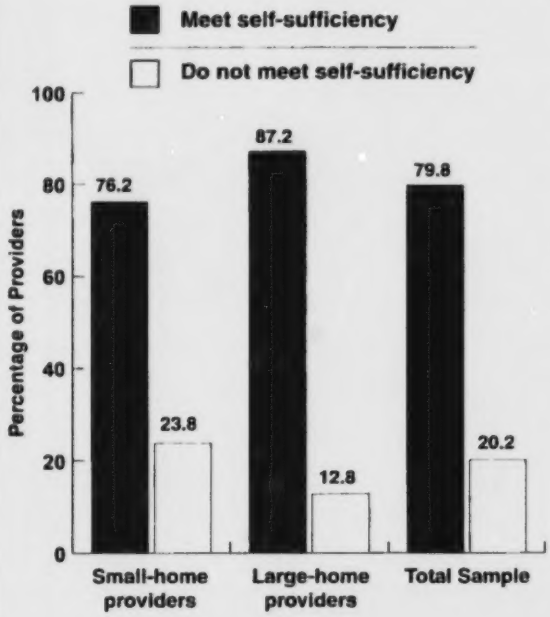
Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children who received subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Figure 8. Alameda County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



Among those who reported household income and earnings, approximately three-fifths lived in households with two or more adults contributing to their household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $40,000 and $44,999. Large-home providers reported living in households with a higher average annual income, between $50,000 and $54,999.[xxi] Fifty-nine percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

Figure 9a. Alameda County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



The self-sufficiency standard[4] is a measure of economic well-being based on the size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the self-sufficiency wage within a county (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the Alameda County standard insuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs, without public subsidies or private/family assistance. Twenty percent of providers in Alameda County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 9a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they owned their own homes (see Figure 9b),[xxiii] were married or living with a partner (Figure 9c), and had higher net earnings from their child care businesses.[xxiv] Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.[xxv]

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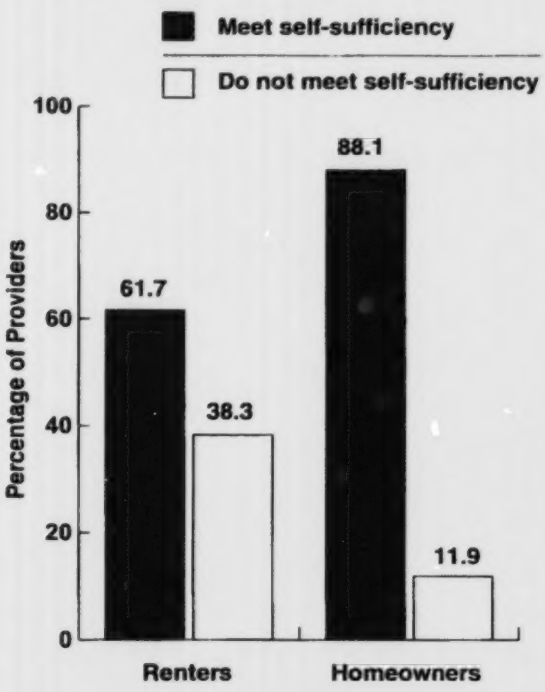
Figure 9b. Alameda County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



Approximately two-thirds of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 55 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,398. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $1,042. These payments are higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect the rapidly rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Only one-third (34 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 10). Among those who saved, their average contribution toward retirement was $3,378. Fifteen percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 11). Of the 84 percent that were insured, over half (57 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Thirty-two percent were covered through a private insurance plan,

Figure 9c. Alameda County:
Percentage of Partnered/Single Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

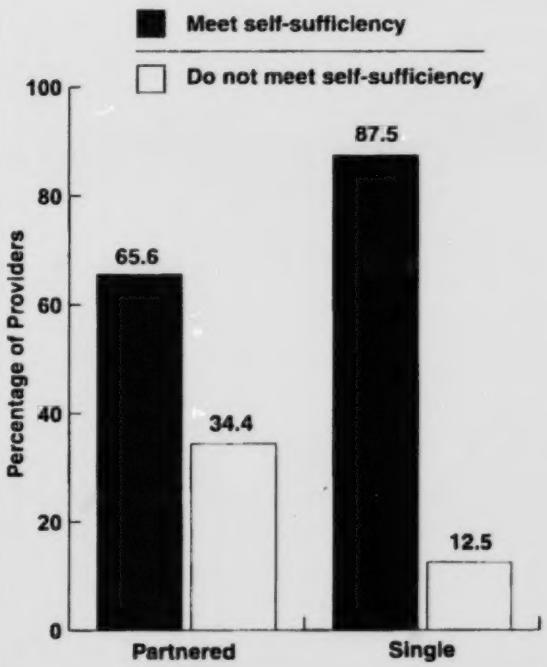


Figure 10. Alameda County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

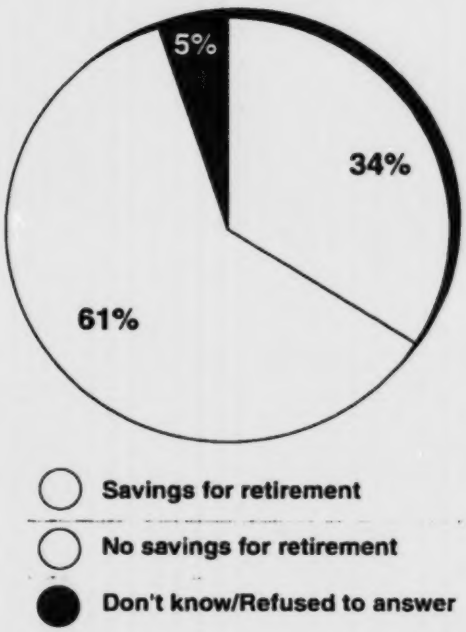
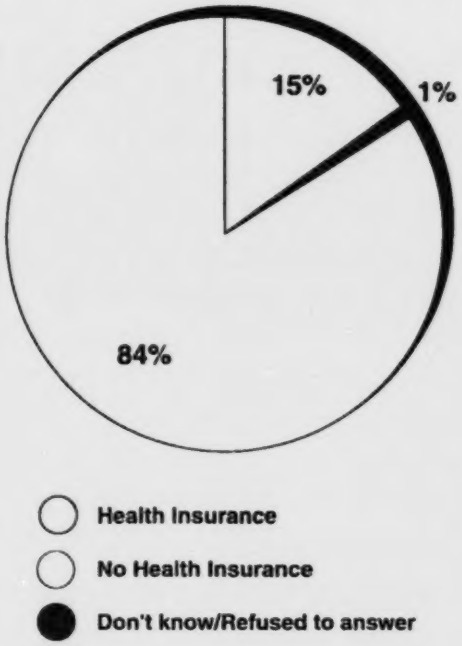


Figure 11. Alameda County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



and only 7.6 percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (96 percent) were also insured; nine percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, about one-third had been covered in the previous year; small-home providers in this group (43 percent) were more likely than large-home providers (14 percent) to have been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

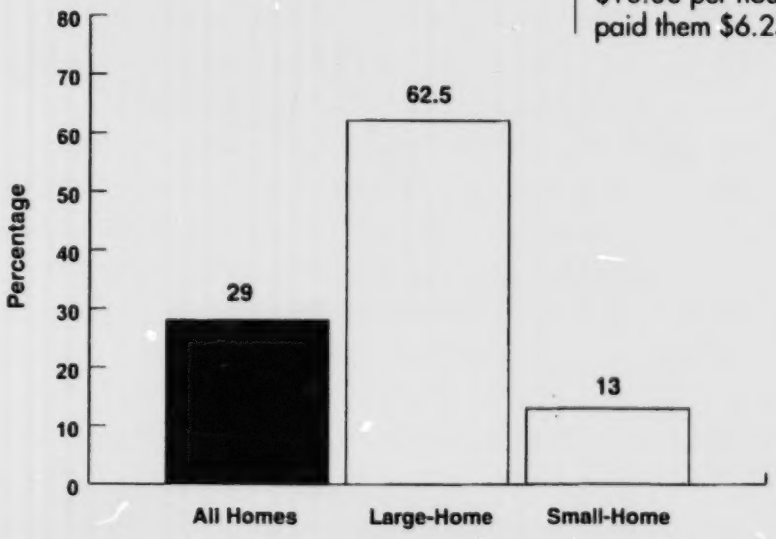
Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Twenty-nine percent of the 370 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=108) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 12). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than 8 children, large homes (63 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (13 percent) to employ assistants.[xxvii] Large homes also hired more assistants (1.81), on average, than did small homes (1.15).[xxviii] Approximately half (55 percent) of those homes employed one assistant, approximately one third (36 percent) employed two assistants, and 6 percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for assistants working in large homes was 3 years, compared to 1.3 years for those employed in small homes.[xxix]

Among homes that reported employing them, assistants worked 25 hours per week on average. Their median wage was $8.00 per hour, with twenty percent earning less than $7.00 per hour and twenty-five percent earning $11.00 per hour or more. Assistants in small homes earned approximately $1.00 more per hour ($9.19) than their counterparts in large homes ($8.15). The vast majority of assistants (90 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Assistants in large homes (30 percent) were more likely than their counterparts in small homes (11 percent) to receive other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.[xxx]

In addition to paid assistants, 41 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Approximately half of the providers (49 percent) paid these helpers, although large-home providers (60 percent) were significantly more likely to pay substitutes than were small-home providers (43 percent).[xxxi] Providers reported a median hourly wage of $9.00 for substitutes. One third of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while one-quarter paid them $6.25 per hour or less.

Figure 12. Alameda County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



Conclusion

Family child care providers in this Alameda County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women of color. The majority of providers were parents, often of very young children. Most had been operating child care programs in their homes for several years. Yet their earnings from child care were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, a fifth of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their family.

Three-quarters of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 44 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded with increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children. And only a small portion of providers who had earned college credits were familiar with or participating in the Child Development Corps and benefiting from the monetary awards and professional development opportunities available through that initiative. Although we do not understand why, neither small-home nor large-home providers as a group cared for as many children as they were licensed to accommodate.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook & Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in Alameda County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

[1] Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

[2] Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

[3] For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

[4] Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 13 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Alameda County.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(183) = -11.22$, $p < .001$
ii	$X^2(1)=9.63$, $p<.001$
iii	$t(363)=-2.00$, $p<.05$
iv	$t(342)=-2.16$, $p<.03$ and $t(360)= -1.97$, $p<.05$
v	$X^2(1)=16.31$, $p< .0001$
vi	$X^2(1)=28.32$, $p< .0001$
vii	$X^2(1) =6.73$, $p<.009$
viii	$t(217)=-2.50$, $p<.01$
ix	$X^2(1)=24.88$, $p.<0001$
x	$t(155)=-4.79$, $p.<.001$
xi	$X^2(1)=3.88$, $p<.05$
xii	$t(363) =4.41$, $p<.000$
xiii	$X^2(1)=7.03$, $p<.01$
xiv	$t(368)=-5.80$, $p<.0001$
xv	$X^2(1)=12.31$, $p<.0001$
xvi	$t(368) =3.10$, $p<.002$
xvii	$t(359) =-6.56$, $p<.000$
xviii	$F(3,257)=3.14$, $p<.05$
xix	$t(259)=-6.82$, $p<.0001$
xx	$t(167)=-4.93$, $p<.000$
xxi	$t(275)=-3.83$, $p<.0001$
xxii	$X^2(1) =23.84$, $p<.00001$
xxiii	$X^2(1) =17.53$, $p<.0001$
xxiv	$t(72)=2.78$, $p<.01$
xxv	$X^2(1) =4.35$, $p<.05$
xxvi	$X^2(1) =4.10$, $p<.04$
xxvii	$X^2(1)=95.34$, $p<.0001$
xxviii	$t(106)=-4.03$, $p<.001$
xxix	$t(164)=-3.02$, $p<.003$
xxx	$X^2(1) =6.28$, $p<. 01$
xxxi	$X^2(1) =3.91$, $p <. 05$

California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Kern County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by

The Center for the Child Care Workforce

The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns Kern County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

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Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related, college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to

increase the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in Kern County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.)

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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Kern County

Kern County is California's third largest county in area and among the fastest-growing in population. The majority of jobs are in the oil industry, agriculture, retail, and warehouse distribution. Jobs are typically low-paid and often involve rotating work schedules, resulting in many families being hard-pressed to find or afford adequate child care services (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a 22 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to 661,645 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 53 percent of the 165,111 children under 14 have working parents;[1]
- 47 percent of the 67,681 children 0-5 have working parents;[1]
- 32 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 33 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

In response to the growing demand, the number of spaces in family child care homes grew by 55 percent over a two-year period, from 4,594 in 1998 to 7,124 in 2000. Between 1998 and 2000, the actual number of homes increased by 49 percent. Eighty-nine percent of requests to resource and referral agencies by parents for child care are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To expand and improve the quality of care, child care advocates have worked to increase the supply and quality of care. The resource and referral agency offers business skills training and technical assistance to licensed providers and televised training for providers who want to continue their education. A mini-loan fund also helps child care providers make needed improvements or expand their services.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agency, 1,063 homes comprised the total population of licensed family child care providers in Kern County as of spring 2001. Originally, we hoped to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the licensed home-based population. But due to the size of the provider population and the related costs of data collection, we instead randomly selected a sample or subset of the population to survey.

Random sampling is the best way to obtain a sample that is representative of the entire population, and is a process that insures that each provider has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of the population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (31 percent of the county provider population; n=331), and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 4.47 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 4.47 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 5.02 percent for small-home providers and 9.76 percent for large-home providers.

In order to insure a sufficient sample size, we randomly selected 600 family child care providers (56 percent of the population of

providers in the county) for possible inclusion in the study. Of these, 331 providers (55 percent of the 600) participated, representing 31 percent of all licensed providers in Kern County. Small homes comprised four-fifths (80 percent) of the sample (n=266), with large homes making up the balance (20 percent or n=65), closely representing the distribution of small and large homes (83 percent and 17 percent, respectively) in the county population of providers. All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. Kern

Table 1. Kern County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
Kern County licensed homes	1,063	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample	600	56.4	100.0
Completed interview	331	31.1	55.2
Refused to participate	73		12.2
Out of business	79		13.2
Communication barrier	1		0.2
Unresolved number*	90		15.0
Unavailable, no contact made	7		1.2
Did not complete	19		3.2
Other	0		0

* "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers had ever applied for or were interested in applying for a business loan for the purpose of improving or expanding their child care business. Providers who had applied were asked whether they had received the loan, and if so, its amount.

Data Collection

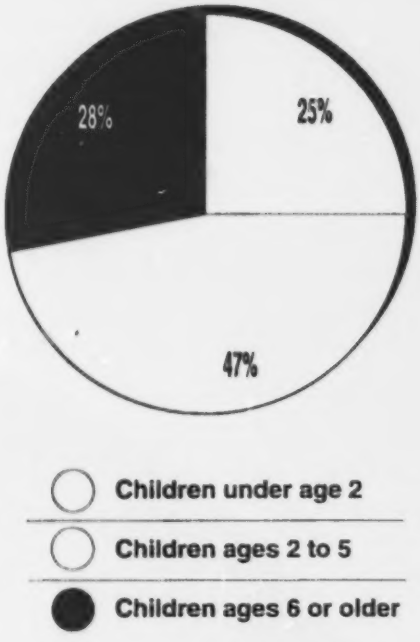
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back family child care providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Eighty-seven percent (n= 288) of the interviews were completed in English, and 13 percent were completed in Spanish (n=43). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 331 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for 2,416 children, two thirds of whom (68 percent; n= 1,635) were cared for in small homes, and the remainder of whom (32 percent; n= 781) were cared for in large homes. As indicated in Figure 1, almost three-quarters of the children (71 percent; n= 1,729) were five years old or younger. Nearly half (47 percent) of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five, while the remainder were divided evenly between infants/toddlers and school-age children.

Figure 1. Kern County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



Most often, providers cared for mixed-age groups. Seventy-nine percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 89 percent were paid to care for children ages two to five, and 67 percent were paid to care for school-age children. Twenty-nine percent of providers were parents or

guardians to children under the age of three, 33 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 69 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[i]

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). The reasons for this are not clear to us, because we were not able to ask providers why they typically cared for fewer than the permitted number of children. This finding suggests, however, that the licensed capacity in the county was somewhat larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 9,602 slots in Kern County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 9,027 children enrolled in licensed home care. Our estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and on weighted calculations reflecting the total percentage of small and large family child care homes in the county.

The majority of providers worked long hours. Fifty-five hours per week was the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Eleven percent of providers worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only five percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Fifteen percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, half of providers (50 percent) reported spending more than 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. More than one quarter of the sample (30 percent) reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more time each week caring for children (64 hours on average) than did small-home providers (53 hours).[ii]

A substantial number of licensed providers in Kern County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Forty-five percent of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly-funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (69 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (40 percent).[iii] More than two-thirds of all providers (69 percent) participated in the federally-funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (89 percent)

Table 2. Kern County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared For Weekly by Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

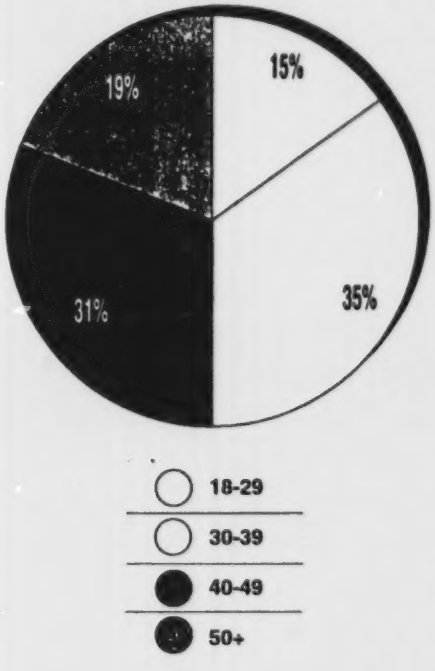
	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=265)	8	7.5	1.3	1.5	2.9	1.8
Large-Home Providers (n=65)	14	13.2	1.2	2.9	5.7	3.4

were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (64 percent).[iv]

Personal Characteristics of Providers [3]

Family child care providers in Kern County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only two of the providers interviewed for this study (fewer than 1 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 40 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Kern County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



All of the respondents provided information about their ethnicity. Approximately half of providers (50.5 percent) were White and half (49.5 percent) were women of color. As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the provider population was comprised of a somewhat higher percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the adult population in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census), but a lower percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the child population as a whole. White providers reported achieving higher levels of education than providers of color.[v]

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Twenty-five percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 87 percent and Spanish for 13 percent of the interviews. Twenty-one percent of providers were bilingual in Spanish and English. According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 34 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 29 percent are fluent in Spanish. Eighty-nine percent of providers spoke to children in English.

Approximately three-quarters of the providers (76 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Three-quarters (75 percent) of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (23 percent) or two children (38 percent). Over half of the providers were parents or guardians of children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 4. Sixty-seven percent of single providers were parents, and 31 percent had children five years old or younger.

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become licensed, prospective family child care providers are required by the State of California to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or

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Figure 3a. Kern County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

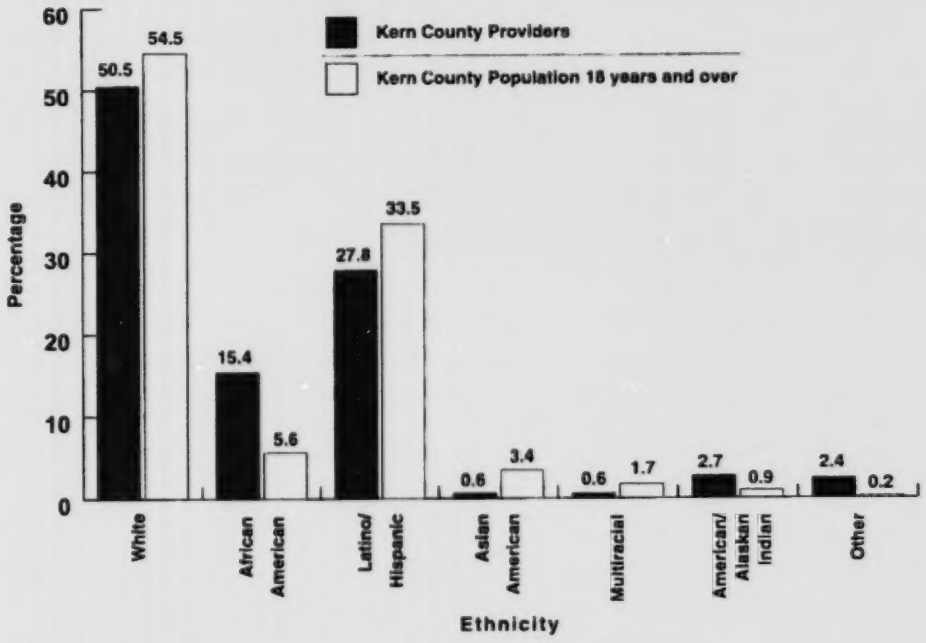


Figure 3b. Kern County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

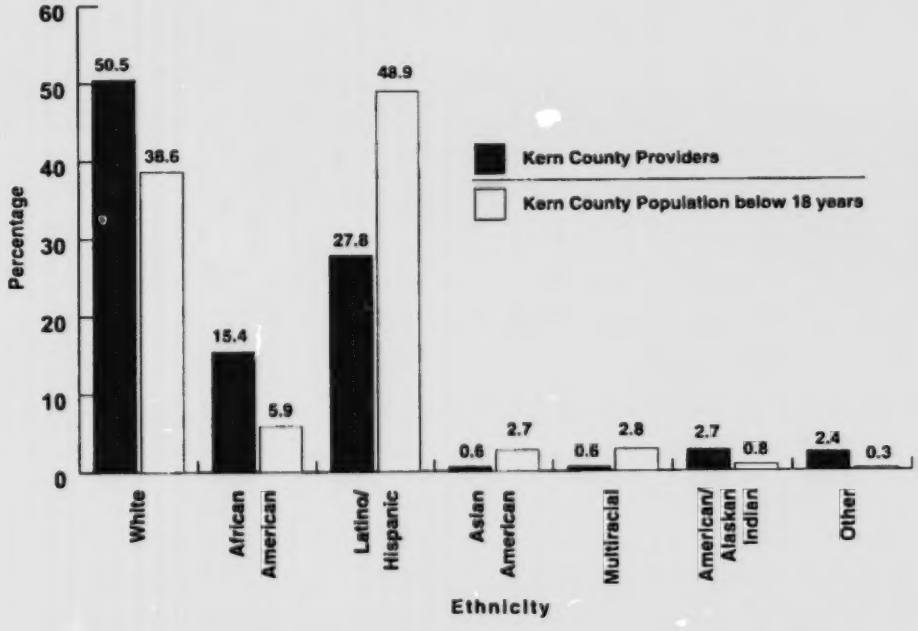
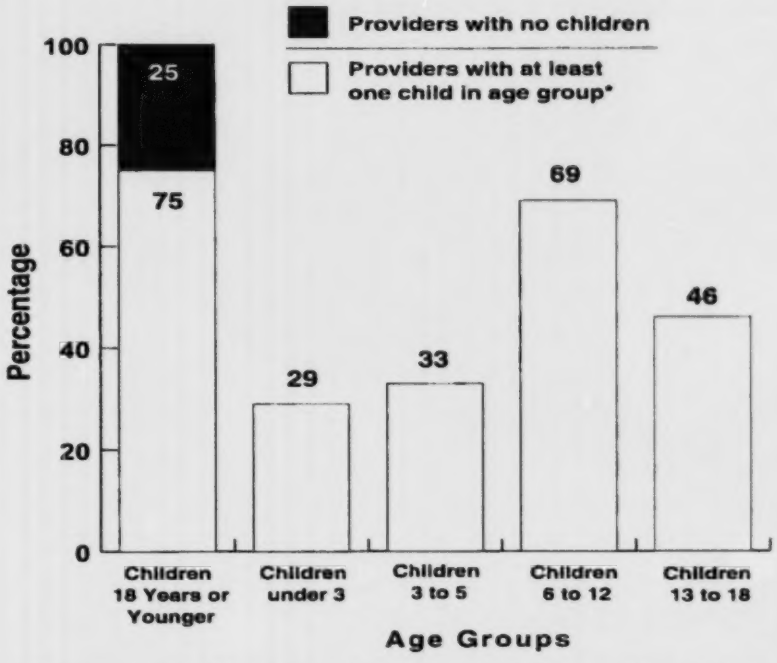


Figure 4. Kern County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentage may add up to more than 100 since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Providers in Kern County had completed high school (90 percent) and some college or an associate's degree (68 percent) at higher rates than the county's overall adult population (69 percent for high school, and 30 percent for some college or an associate's degree [Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census]). (See Figure 5). Approximately three percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher, compared to 14 percent of adults in the county as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were more likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in the county.

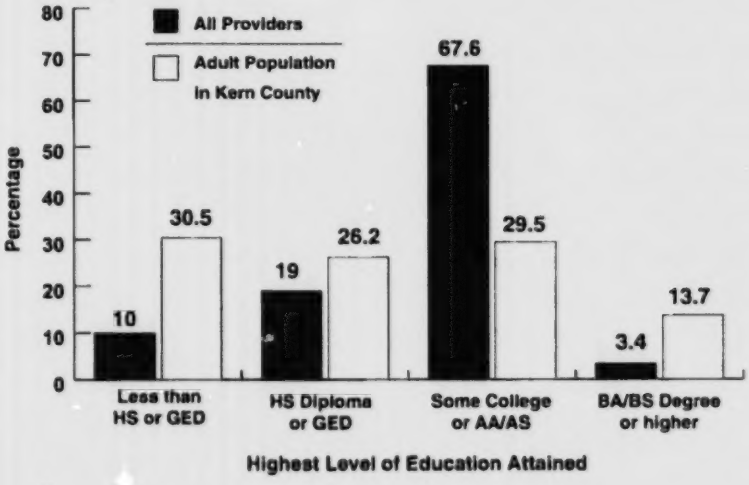
Table 3. Kern County: Highest Level of Education Completed By Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	10.0	32
HS Diploma or GED	19.0	61
Some college	57.9	186
AA/AS degree	9.7	31
BA/BS degree	2.8	9
MA/MS degree	0.6	2
Total	**100.0**	**321**

Among all providers, 54 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c:

- among all providers, large-home child care providers were likely to have completed more units of college credit in early childhood education than small-home providers;[vi]

Figure 5. Kern County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County



- three-fifths of all providers (60 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- fewer than one-quarter of all providers (17 percent) had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- only thirty providers (9 percent) had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 71 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 76 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

All of the 11 providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education operated small homes.[vii] Approximately half (55 percent) had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers, six (two percent) had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development.

Two providers (fewer than one percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Ten percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year.

Many providers in Kern County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college credit. For example, 70 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 57 percent reported engaging in 20 hours or more of such training. Fifty-seven percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with 49 percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Forty-two percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in Kern County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 22 of the 331 providers (7 percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Forty-four providers (13 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Figure 6a. Kern County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers

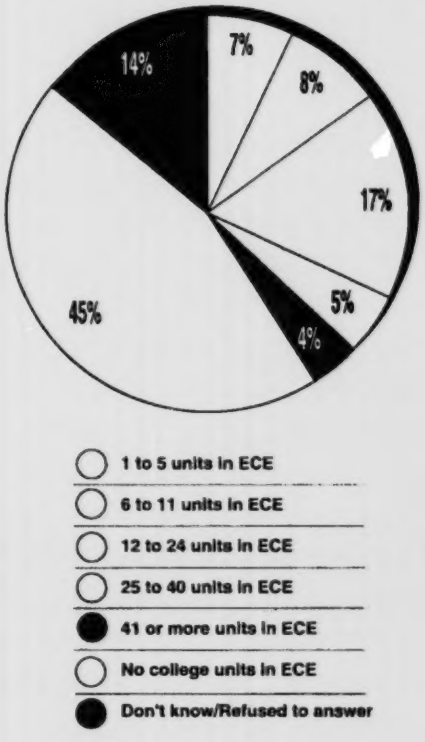
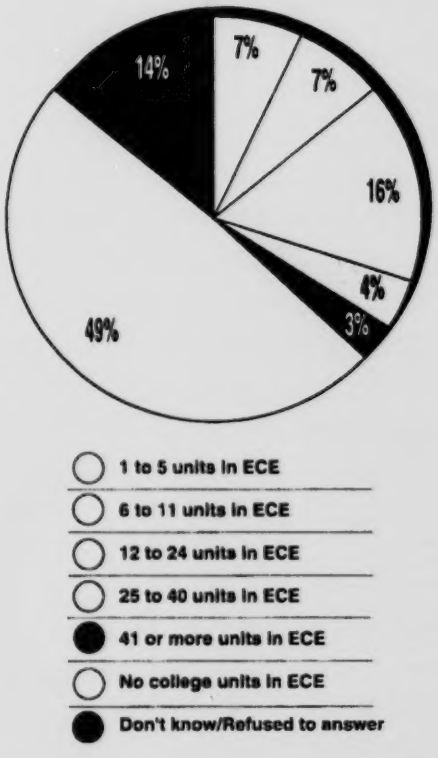


Figure 6b. Kern County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers



Career Longevity

Kern County providers in this study were experienced, having worked an average of six years in their home businesses; 15 percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (5.05 years) than large-home providers (8.2 years).[viii] Small-home providers (18 percent) were more likely than large-home providers (5 percent) to have been operating a child care business for a year or less, but less likely (17 percent) than large-home providers (42 percent) to have operated their business for 10 years or more.[ix]

White providers averaged greater tenure (6.8 years) than providers of color (4.5 years).[x] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure than those who rented their homes.[xi] Tenure was also related to earnings from child care; those with less than one year of experience earned significantly less than those with one year of experience or more.[xii]

Economic Status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or gross earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers

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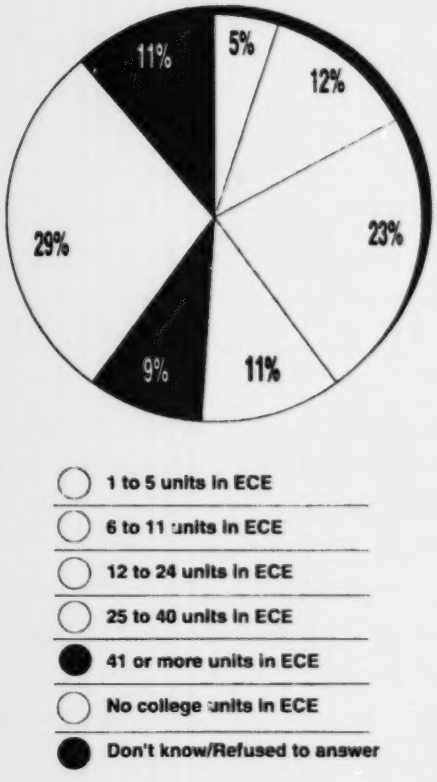
Figure 6c. Kern County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



reported average gross earnings ranging from $15,000 to $19,999 per year, and large-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $30,000 to $34,999. The average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $20,000 and $24,999. Net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred to operate their child care businesses in a home, were also lower for small-home providers than for large-home providers. Only half of the sample provided this information. Small-home providers reported average net earnings of $5,632 compared to $11,166 for large-home providers. Starting salaries for K-12 teachers in Kern County, who typically have more education but who work a much shorter day and year, averaged $26,878 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in Kern County were $48,487 and high-end earnings were $76,816. Half of the providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year. Sixteen percent reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business (see Figure 7). Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children receiving subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Only six percent (n=19) of providers in the sample reported having ever applied for a loan for their child care business. Of those, over two-fifths (44 percent) had received the loan, in amounts ranging from $4,200 to $32,000. Among providers who had never applied for a loan, nearly half (46 percent) expressed interest in applying for a loan in the future. Eighty-three percent of providers who had applied previously expressed interest in applying for another loan.

Among those who reported household income and earnings, three-quarters lived in households with two or more adults contributing to the household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $35,000 and $39,999, and large-home providers reported an average annual household income between $45,000 and $49,999.[xv] Sixty-nine percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[4] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of chil-

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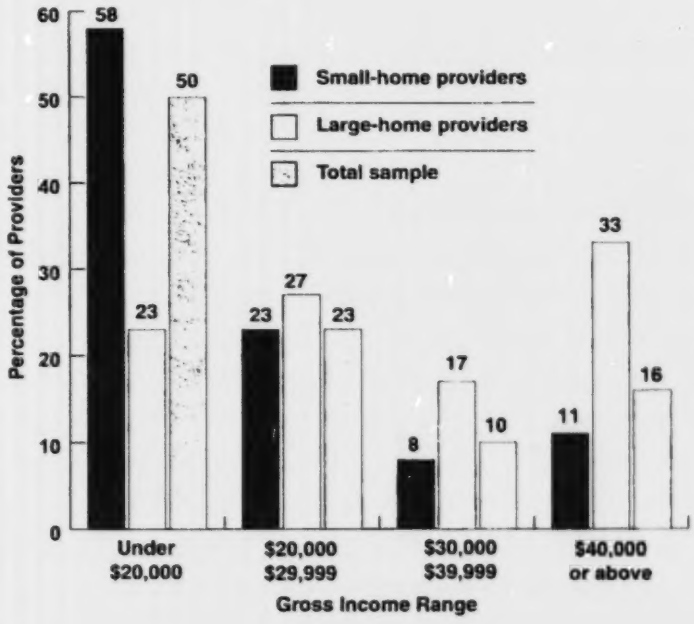
Figure 7. Kern County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



Three-quarters of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 62 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $809. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $577. These payments are slightly higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

dren living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the Kern County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Thirty percent of providers in Kern County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they were older, owned their own homes (see Figure 8b), were married or living with a partner (see Figure 8c), and had higher gross earnings from their child care businesses.[xvi] Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.[xvii]

Figure 8a. Kern County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

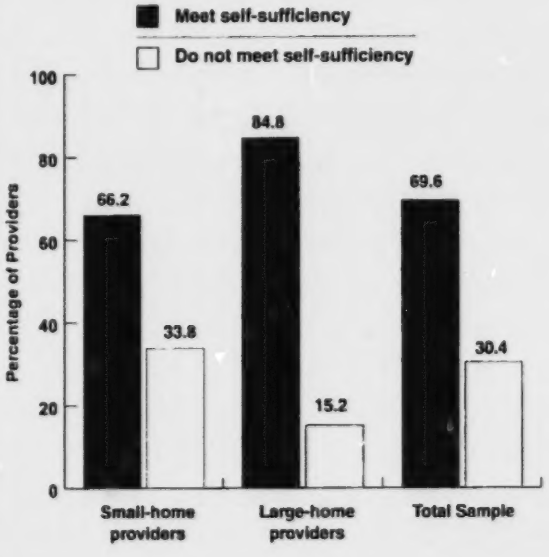


Figure 8b. Kern County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

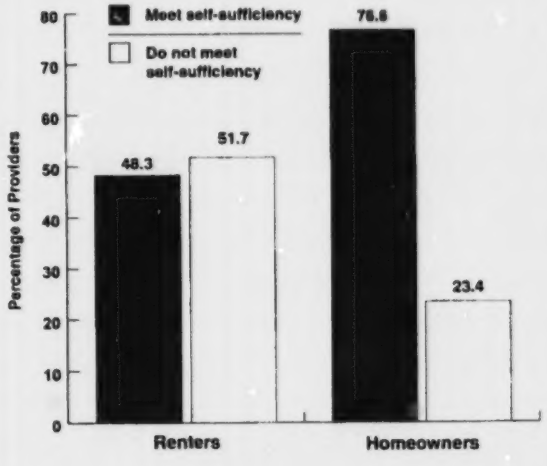
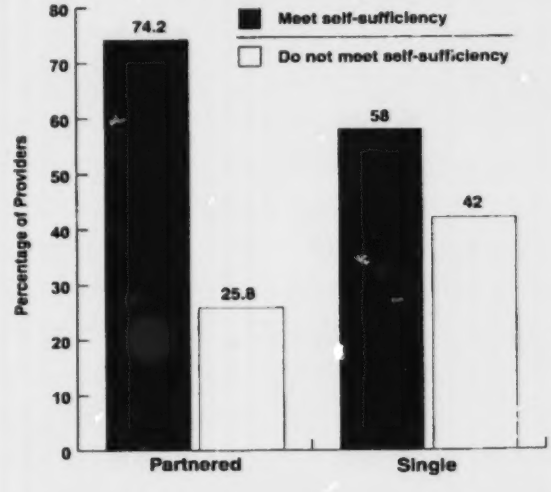


Figure 8c. Kern County:
Percentage of Partnered/Single Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



Fewer than one-quarter (22 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Among those who saved, the average contribution toward retirement was $3,794. Twenty-one percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other government or private health plan covering all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Of the 79 percent that were covered, two-thirds (66 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Twenty percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and 17 percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (90 percent) were also insured; twenty-one percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, approximately one-quarter (24 percent) had been covered in the previous year.

Figure 9. Kern County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

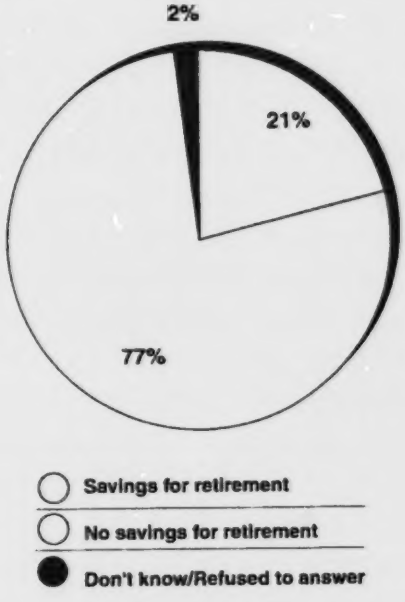
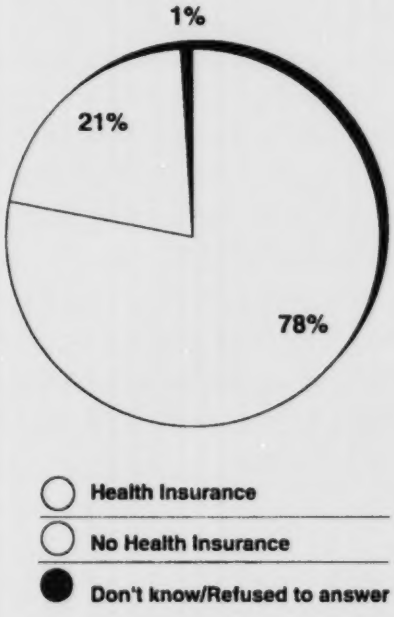


Figure 10. Kern County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



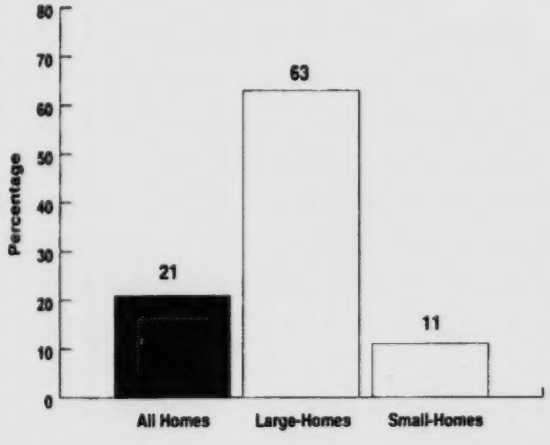
Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Twenty-one percent of the 331 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=69) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (63 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (11 percent) to employ assistants.[xviii] Homes hired 1.38 assistants on average. Approximately three-quarters (73 percent) of those homes employed one assistant, approximately one-fifth (19 percent) employed two assistants, and nine percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for assistants was 1.74 years. Assistants employed at large homes (2.21 years) had longer tenure than assistants employed in small homes (.93 years).[xix]

Among homes that reported employing them, assistants worked 23 hours per week on average. The median wage for assistants was $6.68 per hour, with 31 percent earning $6.00 per hour or less and seven percent earning $9.00 per hour or more. The vast majority of assistants (97 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Only 15 percent of assistants received other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

In addition to paid assistants, 47 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Approximately half of the providers (52 percent) paid these helpers. Providers reported an average hourly wage of $6.59 for substitutes. Five percent of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while approximately one-quarter (27 percent) paid them $5.00 per hour or less.

Figure 11. Kern County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



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Conclusion

Family child care providers in this Kern County study were evenly divided between women of color and white women. The majority were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care in their homes for several years, yet their child care earnings were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, nearly a third of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

Nearly three-quarters of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 54 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children. Although we do not understand why, neither small-home nor large-home providers as a group cared for as many children as they were licensed to accommodate.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook & Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in Kern County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

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Endnotes

[1] Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

[2] Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

[3] For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

[4] Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 10 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Kern County*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(72)=-5.57$, $p<.001$
ii	$t(320)=-3.13$, $p<.002$
iii	$X^2(1)=17.06$, $p<.001$
iv	$X^2(1)=15.50$, $p<.001$
v	$t(329)=4.03$, $p<.001$
vi	$t(285)=-2.47$, $p<.05$
vii	$X^2(1)=11.00$, $p<.001$
viii	$t(329)=-3.69$, $p<.0001$
ix	$X^2(3)=21.76$, $p<.0007$
x	$t(328)=3.33$, $p=.001$
xi	$t(156)=3.49$, $p=.001$
xii	$t(37)=-4.55$, $p<.01$
xiii	$t(242)=2.85$, $p<.01$
xiv	$t(41)=-2.97$, $p<.003$
xv	$t(276)=-2.78$, $p<.01$
xvi	age: $t(244)=4.96$, $p<.001$; owned home: $X^2(1)=16.83$, $p<.0001$; marital/partner status: $X^2(1)= 6.16$, $p<.05$; gross income: $t(210)=7.60$, $p<.001$
xvii	$X^2(1)=6.13$, $p<.05$
xviii	$X^2(1)=87.42$, $p<.000001$
xix	$t(91)=-3.47$, $p<.01$

California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Monterey County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns Monterey County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

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Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to increase

the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in Monterey County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.) Large-home providers must also have an assistant.

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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Monterey County

Monterey County, traditionally known for agriculture and tourism, has been transformed in recent years by high technology industry expansion, which has forced up the cost of housing. The high cost of living in the county requires most parents to work outside the home, yet child care is unaffordable for many low-wage farming and service workers. (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a 13 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to over 400,000 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 58 percent of the 89,903 children under 14 have working parents; [1]
- 52 percent of the 37,777 children 0-5 have working parents; [1]
- 24 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 21 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

In response to the growing demand, the number of spaces in family child care homes has grown significantly in recent years in some parts of the county. Between 1998 and 2000, the actual number of homes increased by approximately 42 percent. Ninety-one percent of parents' child care requests to resource and referral agencies are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To offer providers incentives to stay in the field as well as to improve the quality of care, the Monterey County Children and Families Commission will soon initiate a CARES (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability) program, granting stipends to home- and center-based providers to reward and encourage their commitment and professional development. The resource and referral (R&R) agency offers monthly licensing orientations and technical assistance in Spanish for prospective providers, in order to build the supply of homes serving the thousands of Spanish-speaking parents working in the county. The R&R also uses Spanish-language radio to answer providers' and parents' questions about child development and safety issues, and recently collaborated with Hartnell College to offer special training in infant and toddler care to Spanish-speaking providers.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agency, there were 510 licensed family child care providers in Monterey County as of spring 2001. Our goal was to conduct a census or official survey of each and every provider in the licensed home-based population in the county; we attempted to contact all licensed providers, and succeeded at reaching 309, a 61 percent sample of the provider population. Small homes comprised two-thirds (66 percent) of the sample (n=204), with large homes (34 percent or n=105) making up the balance, closely representing the distribution of small and large homes (68 percent and 32 percent, respectively) homes in the county population of providers.

In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of a population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (61 percent; n=309) and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of

Table 1. Monterey County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
Monterey County licensed homes	510	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample*	497	97.5	100.0
Completed interview	309	60.6	62.2
Refused to participate	25		5.0
Out of business	37		7.4
Communication barrier	3		0.6
Unresolved number**	63		12.7
Unavailable, no contact made	15		3.0
Did not complete	40		8.0
Other	5		1.0

* Thirteen providers were contacted for pilot interviews and were excluded from the final sample.
** "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 3.5 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 4.39 percent for small-home providers and 5.77 percent for large-home providers.

All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. Monterey County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers enrolled as many children as they would like, and if not, what prevented them from doing so.

Data Collection

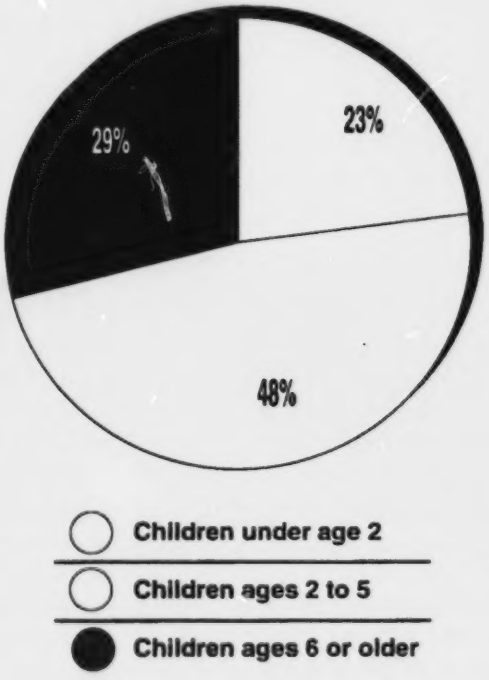
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back those providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Sixty-five percent (n=201) of the interviews were completed in English, and thirty-five percent were completed in Spanish (n=108). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 309 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for 2,286 children, slightly more than half of whom (55 percent; n= 1,257) were cared for in small homes, and the remainder (45 percent; n= 1,029) in large homes. As indicated in Figure 1, almost three-quarters of the children (71 percent; n= 1,623) were five years old or younger. Nearly half of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five, with the remainder divided evenly between infants/toddlers and school-age children.

Figure 1. Monterey County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



Most providers cared for mixed-age groups. Seventy-nine percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 93 percent cared for children ages two to five, and 72 percent cared for school-age children. Nineteen percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 26 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 76 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[i]

Table 2. Monterey County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared For Weekly By Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under age 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 and older
Small-Home Providers (n=204)	8	7.41	1.25	1.55	2.85	1.76
Large-Home Providers (n=105)	14	10.69	0.8	1.93	5.05	2.91

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). This finding suggests that the licensed capacity in the county was substantially larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 5,070 slots in Monterey County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 4,320 children enrolled in licensed home care. Our estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and on weighted calculations reflecting the total percentage of small and large family child care homes in the county.

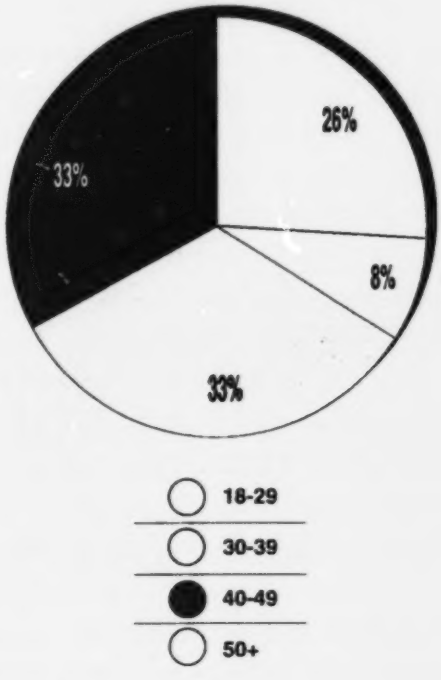
Sixty-five percent of providers reported having as many children enrolled in their programs as they would like. Large-home providers (73 percent) were more likely than small-home providers (61 percent) to be satisfied with their enrollment levels. The following reasons were given by providers for explaining their dissatisfaction with enrollment: no other families interested at this time (36 percent); space not adequate for serving more children, or landlord won't permit (19 percent); not able to hire assistant to help care for more children (19 percent); or licensing too difficult (7 percent).

The majority of providers worked long hours, with 50 hours per week as the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Ten percent worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only six percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Ten percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, 58 percent of providers reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. One third of the sample (33 percent) reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more time each week caring for children (52 hours on average) than did small-home providers (48 hours).[ii]

Many licensed providers in Monterey County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Nearly one-third (32 percent) of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (46 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (25 percent).[viii] In addition, approximately three-quarters of all providers (74 percent)

participated in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (88 percent) were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (68 percent).[iv]

Figure 2. Monterey County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



Personal Characteristics of Providers[3]

Family child care providers in Monterey County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only two of the providers interviewed for this study (fewer than 1 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 43 (see Figure 2). Small-home providers were younger (41 years) on average than large-home providers (47 years).[v]

The majority of providers were women of color. Latinas constituted the largest subgroup of providers (56 percent), followed by Whites (36 percent). As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the provider population contained a higher percentage of Latinas than is characteristic of the county's overall adult population (2000 U.S. Census), but a lower percentage of Latinas than in the county's child population. White providers had completed more education than providers of color.[vi]

Family child care providers in the county were also linguistically diverse. Forty-two percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 65 percent and Spanish for 35 percent of the interviews. Thirty-four percent of small-home providers and 46 percent of large-home providers spoke in Spanish and English.[vii] According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 86 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 40 percent are fluent in Spanish. Seventy-three percent of providers spoke to children in English, 48 percent spoke to children in Spanish, and one percent spoke to children in another language.

Approximately four-fifths of the providers (83 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Approximately two-thirds (68 percent) of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (27 percent) or two children (38 percent).

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Figure 3a. Monterey County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Older

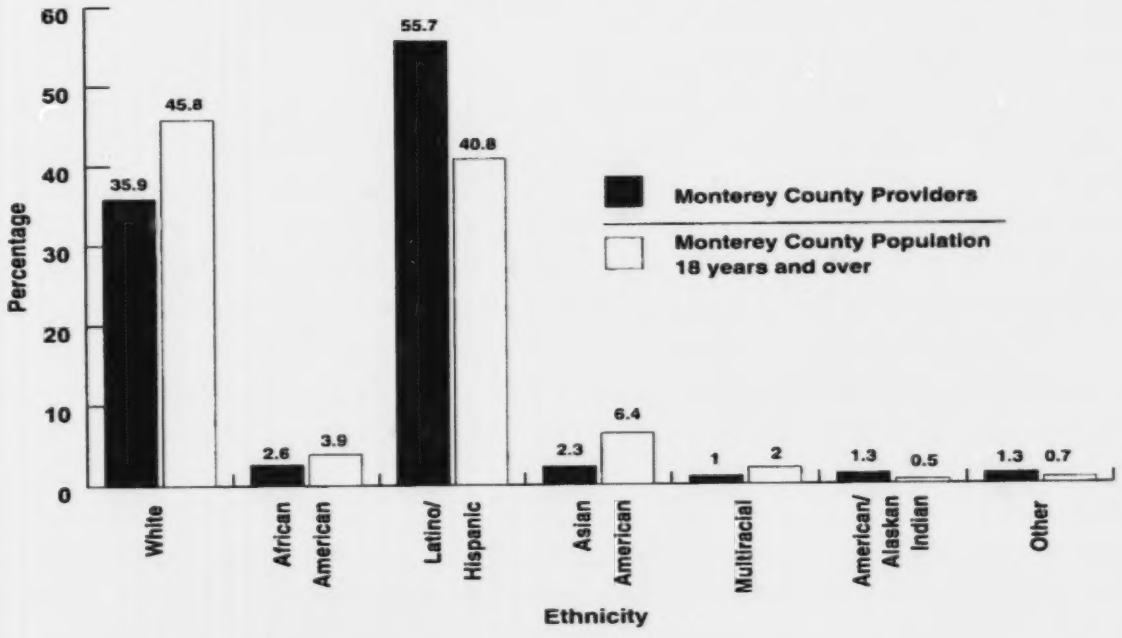


Figure 3b. Monterey County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

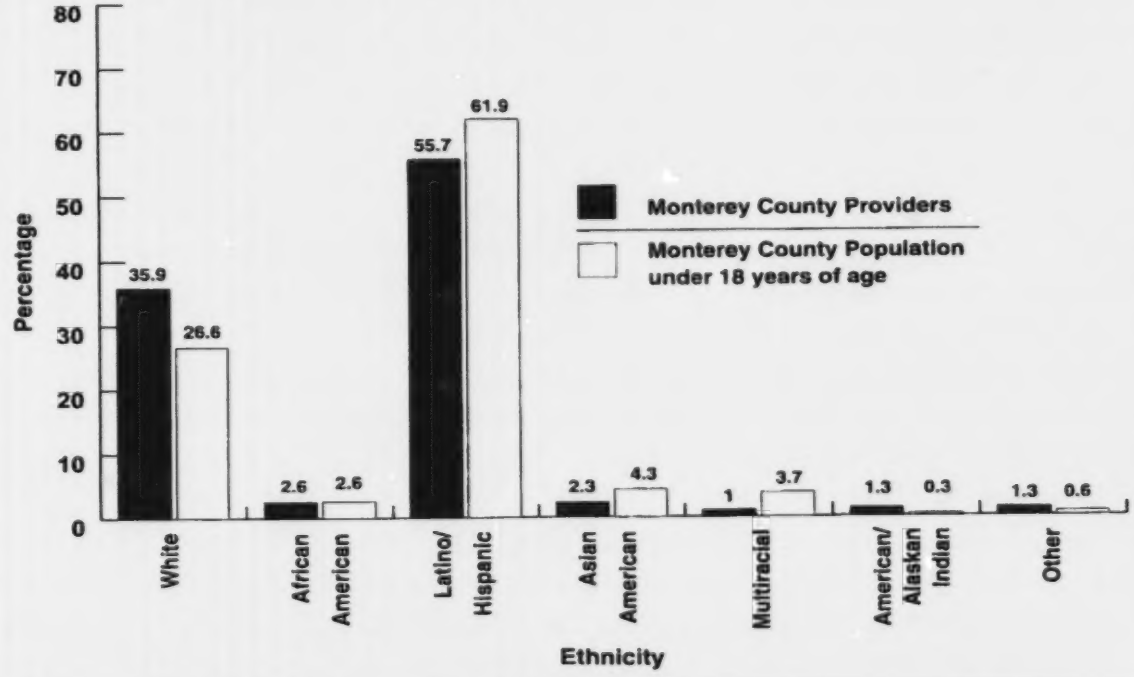
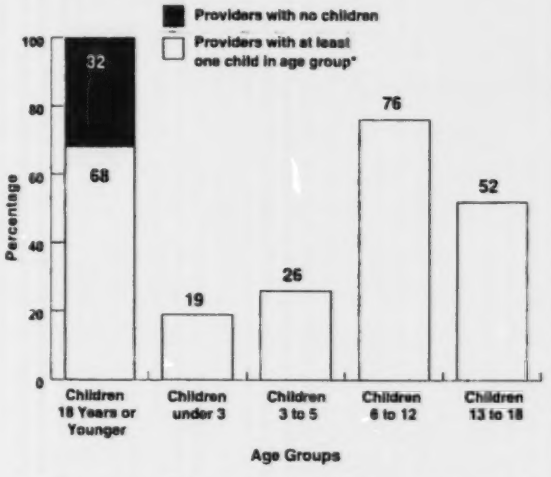


Figure 4. Monterey County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentages add up to more than 100, since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

Nearly half of the providers had children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 4. Fifty-one percent of single providers were parents, and twenty-two percent of single parents had children five years old or younger. Providers operating small homes were more likely to be parents or guardians to children age three to five than were large-home providers.[viii]

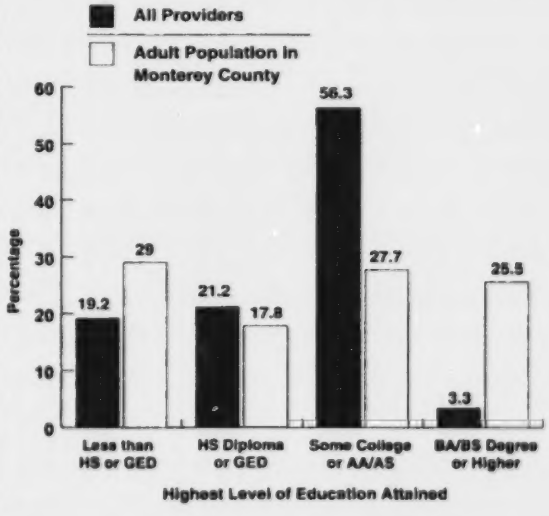
Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become a licensed provider, the State of California requires prospective family child care providers to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Sixty percent of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Providers in Monterey County had completed high school (81 percent) and some college or an associate's degree (56.3 percent) at higher rates than the county's adult population (71 percent for high school, and 27.7 percent for college or an associate's degree [Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census]). (See Figure 5).

Table 3. Monterey County: Highest Level of Education Completed By Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	19.2	58
HS Diploma or GED	21.2	64
Some college	52.3	158
AA/AS degree	4.0	12
BA/BS degree	3.3	10
Total	100.0	302

Figure 5. Monterey County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County



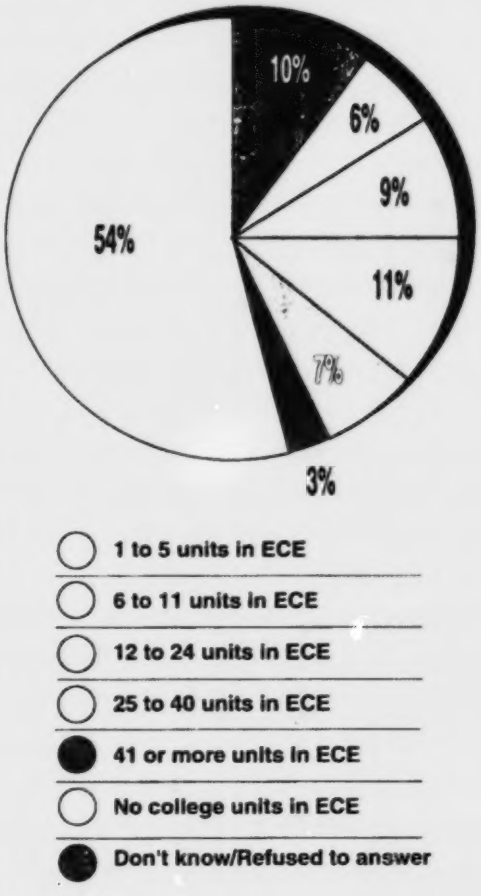
Approximately 3 percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher, compared to 25.5 percent of adults in the county as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were as likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in the county.

Among all providers, 45 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. Large-home providers were more likely to have taken a college course in early childhood education or child development than were small-home providers.[ix] As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c:

- among all providers, large-home child care providers were likely to have completed more units of college credit than small-home providers;*
- approximately three quarters of providers (69.6 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- 11 percent of providers had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- 10 percent of providers had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 60 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 75 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the nine providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, two-thirds had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers, only six (two percent) had earned degrees in early childhood or child development. Two providers (less than one percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Forty percent of providers reported taking

Figure 6a. Monterey County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers



business-related college courses, and of those, nine percent took them in the last year.

Many providers in Monterey County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college credit. For example, 64 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 61 percent reported engaging in 20 hours or more of such

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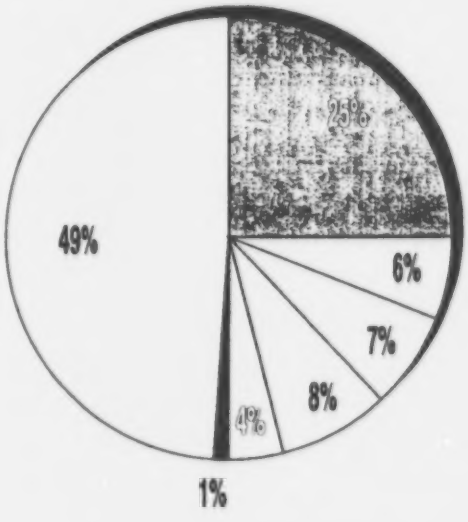
Figure 6b. Monterey County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers



- 1 to 5 units in ECE
- 6 to 11 units in ECE
- 12 to 24 units in ECE
- 25 to 40 units in ECE
- 41 or more units in ECE
- No college units in ECE
- Don't know/Refused to answer

Figure 6c. Monterey County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers

- 1 to 5 units in ECE
- 6 to 11 units in ECE
- 12 to 24 units in ECE
- 25 to 40 units in ECE
- 41 or more units in ECE
- No college units in ECE
- Don't know/Refused to answer

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training. Of those participating in non-college early childhood training, 64 percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with 37 percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Forty percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in Monterey County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 23 of the 309 providers (seven percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Thirty-three providers (11 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

Monterey County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 7.83 years in their home businesses; only 9.4 percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (5.6 years) than large-home providers (12 years).[xi] Small-home providers (14 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (one percent) to have been operating a child care business for one year or less.[xii] White providers averaged greater tenure (12 years) than providers of color (5.5 years).[xiii] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure (8.2 years) than those who rented their homes (5.9 years).[xiv] Tenure was also related to gross income from child care; those with five to 10 years, or 10 years or more, of family child care experience earned significantly more than those with five years of experience or less.[xv]

Economic Status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or gross earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings from child care ranging from $20,000 to $24,999 per year, while large-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $30,000 to $34,999.[xvi] The average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $25,000 and $29,999.

Net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred to operate a child care business in one's home, were also lower for small-home providers than for large-home providers.[xvii] Fifty-six percent of providers did not report their net earnings from child care. Small-home providers reported average net earnings of $6,445, compared to $12,940 for large-home providers.

Starting salaries for K-12 teachers in Monterey County, who typically have more education but work a much shorter day and year, averaged $30,043 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in Monterey County were $53,152 and high-end earnings were $82,973. Slightly over one-third of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year, and more than three-quarters (79 percent) reported net earnings of less than $15,000 per year. Nearly one-quarter (22.5 percent) reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business (see Figure 7). Providers who had higher levels of education did

not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children receiving subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Among those who reported household income and earnings, 79 percent lived in households with two or more adults contributing to their household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $35,000 and $39,999. Large-home providers reported living in households with a higher average annual income, between $40,000 and $44,999.[xviii] Two-thirds of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[4] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the Monterey County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Approximately thirty-five percent of providers in Monterey County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they were older, owned their own homes (see Figure 8b), and had higher gross earnings from their child care businesses.[xix] Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.[xx]

Figure 7. Monterey County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers

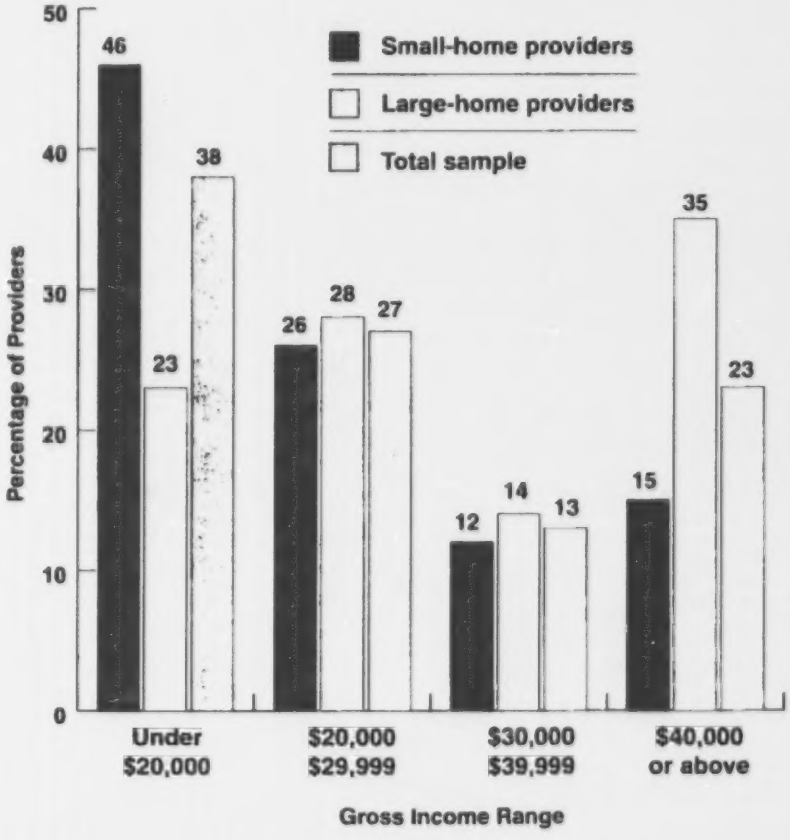


Figure 8a. Monterey County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

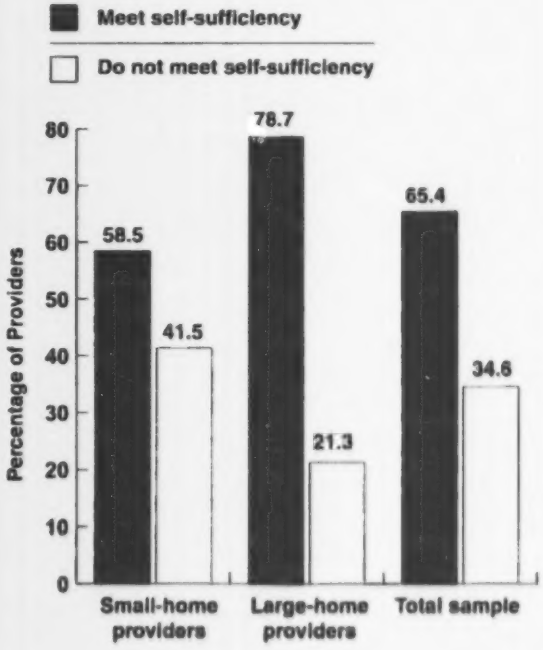
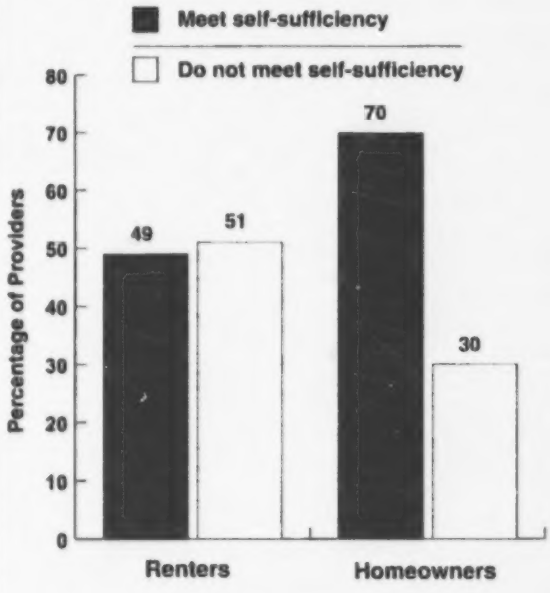


Figure 8b. Monterey County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



A little over four-fifths (83 percent) of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 65 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Small-home providers (21 percent) were more likely to be renters than large-home providers (11 percent).[xxi] Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,167. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $813. Rental payments reported by providers were slightly higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Nearly one-third (29 percent) of providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Large-home providers (37 percent) were more likely to report saving for retirement than small-home providers (25 percent).[xxii] Among those who had saved, the average contribution toward retirement was $3,899.

Twenty-nine percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Of the 71 percent that were covered, approximately two-thirds of insured providers (69 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Twenty-eight percent were

covered through a private insurance plan, and only eight percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (95 percent) were also insured; fifteen percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, about one-fourth had been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

Figure 9. Monterey County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

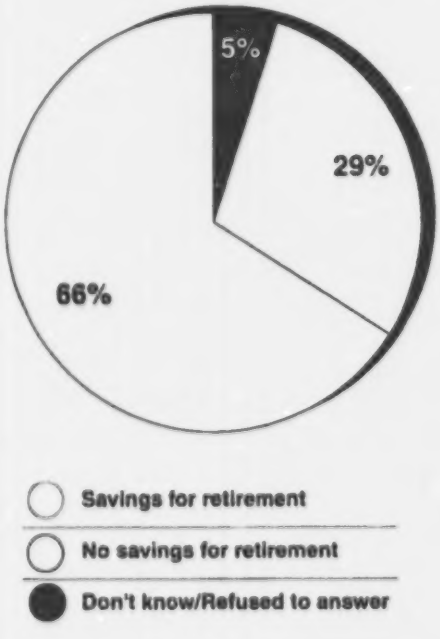
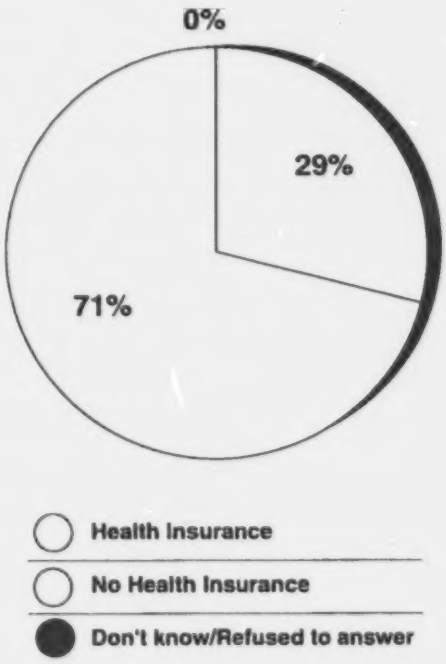


Figure 10. Monterey County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Twenty-two percent of the 309 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=68) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (49 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (eight percent) to employ assistants.[xxiii] Large homes also hired more assistants (1.5), on average, than did small homes (1.2).[xxiv] Over half (57 percent) of those homes employed one assistant, and more than one-third (43 percent) employed

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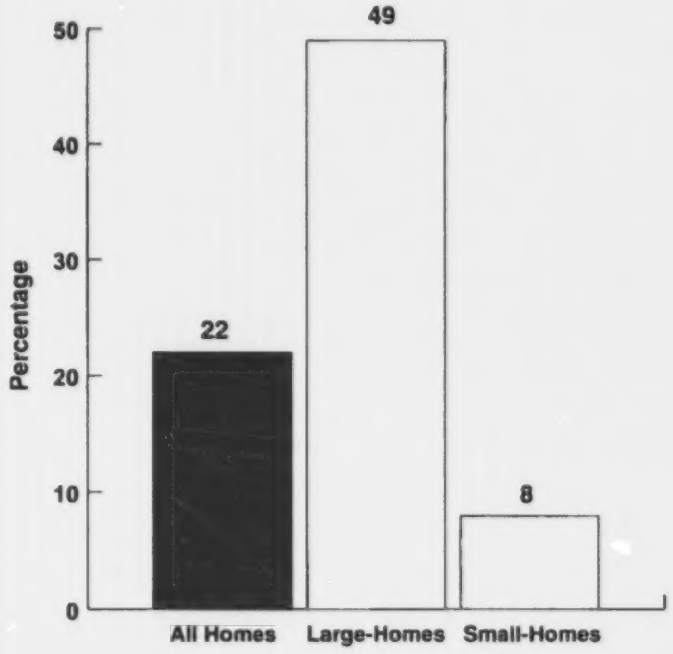
Figure 11. Monterey County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



two assistants. The average tenure for assistants working in large homes was four years, compared to two years for those employed in small homes.[xxv]

Among homes that reported employing assistants, assistants worked 24 hours per week on average. The median wage for assistants was $6.94 per hour, with three-quarters earning $7.00 per hour or less and only sixteen percent earning $10.00 per hour or more. The vast majority of assistants (87 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Fifteen percent of assistants received other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

In addition to paid assistants, 49 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of children in their homes when they were sick. One-half of the providers (50 percent) paid these helpers. Providers reported a mean hourly wage of $8.14 for substitutes. Eight percent of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while approximately one-third paid them $6.00 per hour or less.

Conclusion

Family child care providers in this Monterey County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women, and most were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care in their homes for several years, yet their child care earnings were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, over one-third of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

Three-fifths of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 45 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook and Phillips, 1999).

Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in Monterey County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the child care providers of Monterey County for their willingness to participate in this survey and for their dedication to children and families. A special thank you to Monterey County Child Care Resource & Referral, the Monterey County Children & Families Commission, the Monterey County Child Care Coordinating Council, Monterey Peninsula Community College, and the Monterey County Department of Social Services for providing information about licensed home-based providers in the county and for guidance in preparing this report.

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1 Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2 Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

3 For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

4 Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 10 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Monterey County.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(180)=-7.53$, $p<.001$
ii	$t(298)=-2.34$, $p<.02$
iii	$X^2(1)=14.03$, $p<.0001$
iv	$X^2(1)=14.41$, $p<.0001$
v	$t(305)=-4.43$, $p<.0001$
vi	$t(280)=5.87$, $p<.001$
vii	$X^2(1)=3.81$, $p<.05$
viii	$t(110)=1.97$, $p<.05$
ix	$X^2(1)=6.58$, $p=.01$
x	$t(136)=-3.08$, $p<.01$
xi	$t(158)=-6.75$, $p<.0001$
xii	$X^2(1)=13.29$, $p<.0002$
xiii	$t(165)=6.74$, $p<.001$
xiv	$t(303)=-1.97$, $p<.05$
xv	$F(3,224)=13.17$, $p<.0001$
xvi	$t(141)=-4.08$, $p<.001$ owned home: $X^2(1)=16.83$ marital partner status: $X^2(1)=6.16$
xvii	$t(68)=-3.26$, $p<.01$
xviii	$t(242)=-2.12$, $p<.05$
xix	Age: $t(215)=2.11$, $p<.05$; homeowners/ renters: $X^2(1)=6.46$, $p<.05$; gross income: $t(190)=8.97$, $p<.001$
xx	$X^2(1)=8.87$, $p<.01$
xxi	$X^2(1)=4.86$, $p<.03$
xxii	$X^2(1)=5.07$, $p<.02$
xxiii	$X^2(1)=65.39$, $p<.000001$
xxiv	$t(31)=-2.00$, $p<.05$
xxv	$t(56)=-2.50$, $p<.016$

California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in San Benito County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns San Benito County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

PS 031576

Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to

increase the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in San Benito County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.) Large-home providers must also have an assistant.

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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San Benito County

San Benito County has long been a rural agricultural area, but its proximity to Silicon Valley has recently spurred population growth and an escalation of housing costs. Many San Benito County parents now commute to Silicon Valley jobs, and need flexible child care arrangements that accommodate their long work days. Many providers have had to raise their rates to cover their own housing costs, and many potential providers may have been discouraged from entering the business because of high expenses and insufficient income (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a 45 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to 53,234 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 62 percent of the 13,558 children under 14 have working parents;[1]
- 57 percent of the 5,687 children 0-5 have working parents;[1]
- 18 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 19 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

In response to growing demand, the number of spaces for children in family child care homes grew by 17 percent between 1998 and 2000, although the number of homes remained essentially unchanged, increasing by only two. Spaces in center-based child care decreased by 25 percent during the same period. The county's child care resource and referral agency reports that many homes close down each year, discouraged by the challenges of working long hours for low pay and no benefits. One hundred percent of parents' child care requests to the resource and referral agency are for family child care homes, in part because there are only nine child care centers in the county (CCCRRN, 2001).

To encourage more people to become providers and to help improve the quality of care, the resource and referral (R&R) agency works with new providers to make necessary changes to their homes and to complete license applications. The county Children and Families Commission has provided mini-grants to child care providers to assist them in developing their programs and facilities. Classes for prospective and current providers are offered in Spanish and English, in response to the demographic composition of the provider population (CCCRRN, 2001), in the areas of health, child development, infant caregiving, business management, taxes and other topics. The R&R agency operates a project to recruit and train Spanish-speaking providers, and works in collaboration with the Health Linkages project to provide supportive services and consultation on health-related matters to providers. The San Benito Child Care and Development Planning Council also makes curriculum kits available to loan for all providers, and sponsors an annual Provider Recognition Day which includes awards for outstanding providers, media coverage, and community education about the child care workforce and its importance to the economic and educational life of San Benito County.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the resource and referral agency, there were 86 licensed family child care providers in San Benito County as of spring 2001. Our goal was to conduct a census or official survey of every licensed provider in the county; we attempted to contact all 86 licensed providers and reached 46 of them, or 53.5 percent of the provider population. Small homes comprised 59 percent of the sample (n=27), with large homes (41 percent or n=19) making up the balance,

roughly representing the overall distribution of small and large homes (64 percent and 36 percent, respectively) in the county.

In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of a population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (53.5 percent of providers; n=46) and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 9.9 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 9.9 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 13.46 percent for small-home providers and 13.99 percent for large-home providers.

All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;

Table 1. San Benito County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
San Benito County licensed homes	86	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample*	85	98.8	100.0
Completed interview	46	53.5	54.1
Refused to participate	0		0
Out of business	11		12.9
Communication barrier	0		0
Unresolved number**	27		31.8
Unavailable, no contact made	0		0
Did not complete	0		0
Other	1		1.2

* One provider was contacted for pilot interview and was excluded from the final sample.
** "Answering machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. San Benito County representatives specifically requested information about the extent to which providers relied upon unpaid helpers and/or family members to assist them in taking care of the children in their homes.

Data Collection

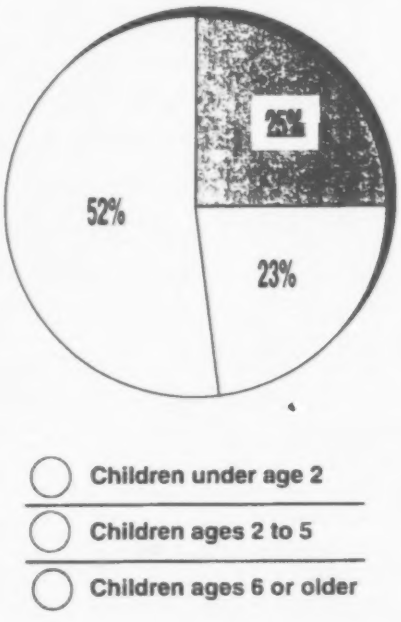
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back those providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Seventy-two percent (n=33) of the interviews were completed in English, and 28 percent were completed in Spanish (n=13). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 46 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for 349 children, approximately half of whom (52 percent; n=181) were cared for in large homes, and the remainder (48 percent; n= 168) in small homes. As indicated in Figure 1, three-quarters of the children (75 percent; n= 261) were five years old or younger. Approximately half of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five, with the remainder divided evenly between infants/toddlers and school-age children.

Figure 1. San Benito County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



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Most providers cared for mixed-age groups. Seventy percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 91 percent cared for children ages two to five, and 65 percent cared for school-age children. Twenty-seven percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 37 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 73 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[1]

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). The reasons for this are not clear to us, because we were not able to ask providers why they typically cared for fewer than the permitted number of children. This finding suggests, however, that the licensed capacity in the county was substantially larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 874 slots in San Benito County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 735 children enrolled in licensed home care. Our estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and on weighted calculations reflecting the total percentage of small and large family child care homes in the county.

The majority of providers worked long hours. Fifty-two hours per week was the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Fewer than 10 percent (9.1 percent) worked thirty hours or less each week, and only five percent worked 10 hours or less per week. Fourteen percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, more than one-half of providers (56 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. Approximately one-third (38 percent) of the sample reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks.

A number of licensed providers in San Benito County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Slightly more than one-third (39 percent) of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). In addition, 20 percent of homes received Head Start dollars to care for children of low-income families. More than three-fourths of all providers (78 percent) participated in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food

Table 2. San Benito County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared For Weekly By Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

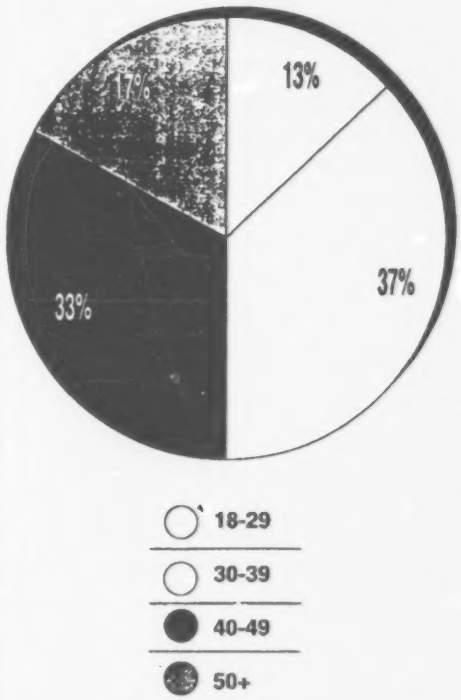
	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=27)	8	7.41	1.18	1.74	3.30	1.19
Large-Home Providers (n=19)	14	10.58	1.05	1.79	4.79	2.95

Program, which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care.

Personal Characteristics of Providers [3]

Family child care providers in San Benito County, like their counterparts in other communities, were exclusively women. None of the providers interviewed for this study were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 40 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. San Benito County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



The majority were women of color. Latinas comprised the largest group of providers (57 percent). As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the population was comprised of a higher percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the county's overall adult population (2000 U.S. Census), but a similar percentage of people of color to the county's child population. White providers, on average, had achieved a higher level of education than providers of color.[ii]

Providers in San Benito County are also linguistically diverse. Fifty-two percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 72 percent and Spanish for 28 percent of the interviews. Thirty-seven percent of small-home providers and 63 percent of large-home providers were bilingual in Spanish and English. Four percent of providers spoke a language other than English or Spanish in addition to the interview language. According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 39 percent of adults in California speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 26 percent are fluent in Spanish. Eighty-five percent of providers spoke to children in English and many also spoke to children in Spanish (50 percent). Four percent spoke to children in another language.

Most providers (87 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Sixty-five percent of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (27 percent), two children (30 percent), or three children (40 percent). Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the providers had children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 4. Of all single providers (n=6), thirty-three percent were parents, and of these single parents 100 percent (n=2) had children five years old or younger.

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Figure 3a. San Benito County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

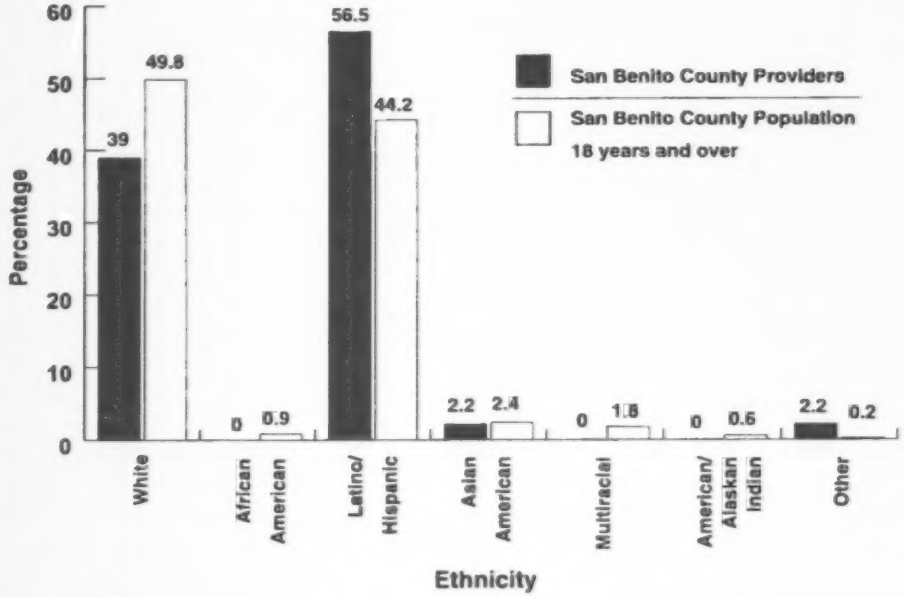


Figure 3b. San Benito County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

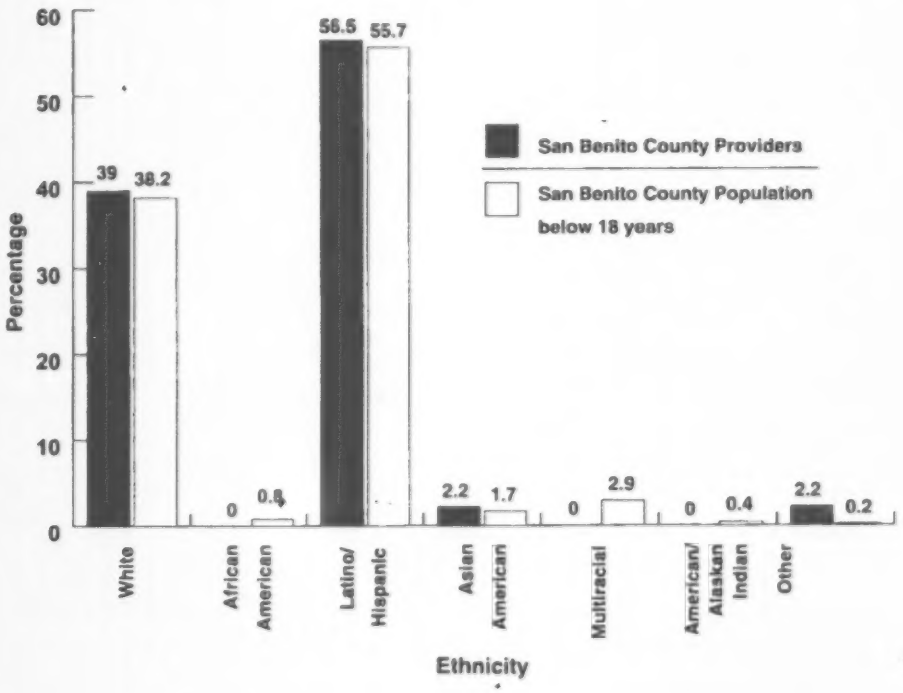
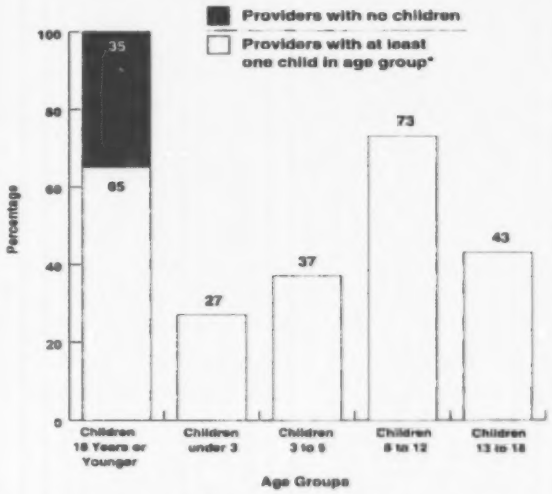


Figure 4. San Benito County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentage may add up to more than 100 since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

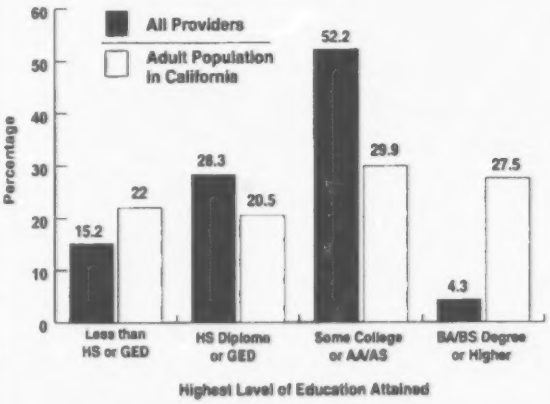
To become a licensed provider, the State of California requires prospective family child care providers to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Fifty-seven percent of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Providers in San Benito County had completed high school or a GED (85 percent) and some college or an associate's degree (52 percent) at higher rates than the adult population in the state (78 percent for high school or a GED, and 30 percent for college or an associate's degree [Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census]). (See Figure 5).

Approximately four percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher, compared to 27.5 percent of adults in the state as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were as likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree, than the average adult living in California. Among all providers, 39 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c for all providers:

Table 3. San Benito County: Highest Level of Education Completed By Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	15.2	7
HS Diploma or GED	28.3	13
Some college	45.7	21
AA/AS degree	6.5	3
BA/BS degree	4.3	2
Total	100.0	46

Figure 5. San Benito County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the State



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- on average, providers had completed only 4.8 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- over three-quarters of providers (79 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- only 15 percent of providers had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- only 4 percent had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 57 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 69 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Figure 6a. San Benito County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers

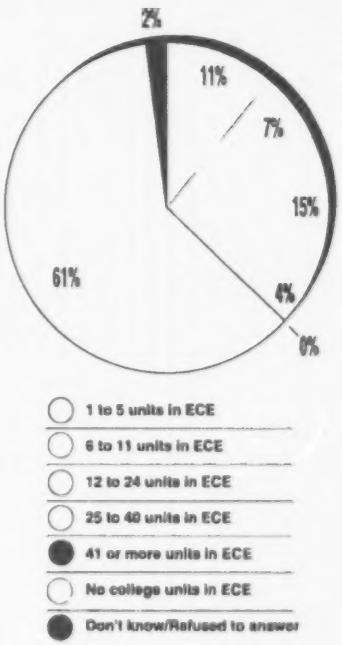


Figure 6b. San Benito County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

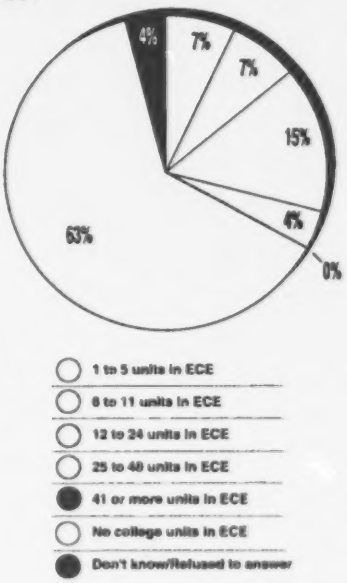
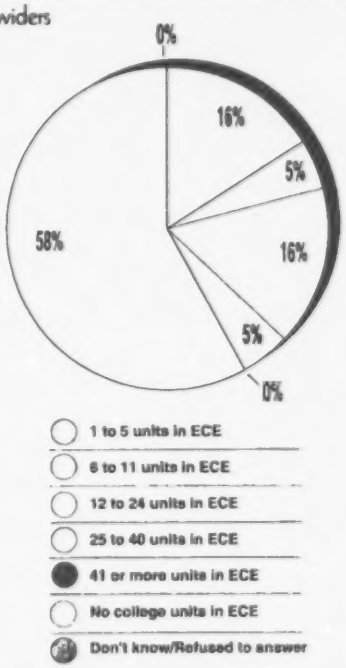


Figure 6c. San Benito County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



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No providers in the sample had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Four percent of providers reported taking business-related courses for college credit in the last year.

Many providers in San Benito County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college credit. For example, 57 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 73 percent reported engaging in 20 hours or more of such training. Seventy-seven percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with fifty percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Thirty-nine percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in San Benito County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only three of the 46 providers (seven percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Five providers (11 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

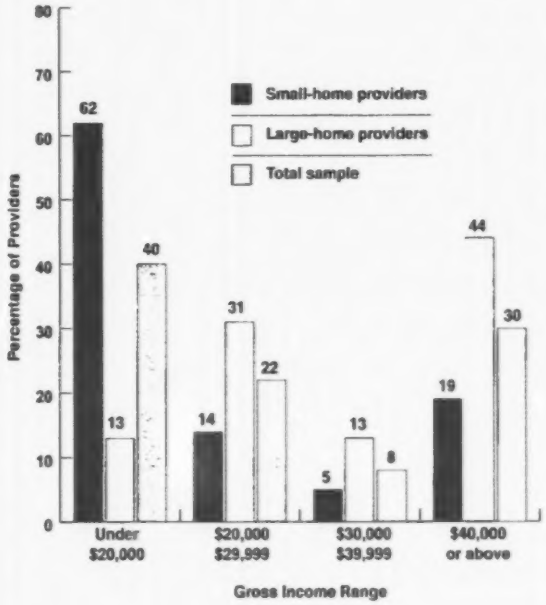
San Benito County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 6.5 years in their home businesses; only 20 percent of the sample had been working in family child care for less than one year. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (4.3 years) than large-home providers (9.6 years).[iii] Small-home providers (33.3 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (0 percent) to have been operating a child care business for less than a year.[iv] White providers averaged greater tenure (8.5 years) than providers of color (5.2 years).[v] There was no difference in tenure between providers who rent or own their own home, nor was there a difference in providers' child care income among providers with varying lengths of tenure.

Economic Status

Seven of the 46 providers (15 percent) did not provide information about their household income, and nine providers (20 percent) did not report gross earnings from child care. Average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $25,000 and $29,999 per year.

Net earnings reflect the expenses incurred to operate a child care business in one's home. One-third of providers did not report this information. Among those who did, average net earnings were also lower for small-home providers ($6,039 per year) than for large-home providers ($13,877).[vi] Starting salaries for K-12 teachers in San Benito, who typically have more education but who work a much shorter day and year, averaged $24,883 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in San Benito County were $45,584 and high-end earnings were $73,165. Two-fifths (41 percent) of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year. Thirty percent reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business (see Figure 7). Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of

Figure 7. San Benito County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



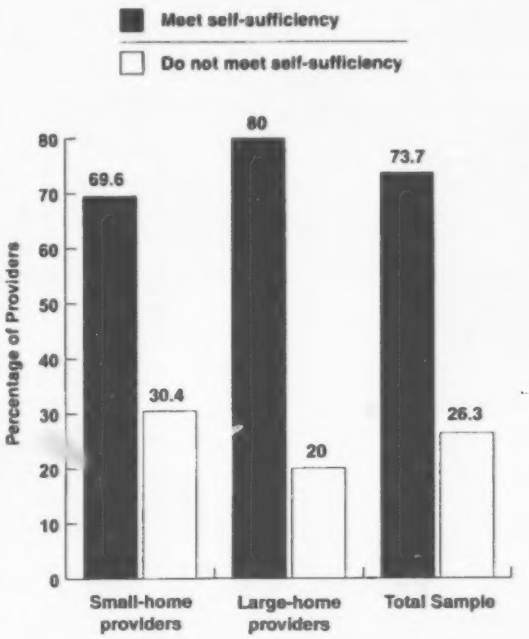
education, nor did those who cared for children receiving subsidized services earn more than those caring only for non-subsidized children.

Among those who reported household income and earnings, four-fifths lived in households with two or more adults contributing to their household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $40,000 and $44,999. Sixty-three percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[vi] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the San Benito County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Twenty-six percent of providers in San Benito County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they had higher net earnings from their child care businesses.[vii]

Eighty-five percent of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 68.2 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census).

Figure 8. San Benito County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,336. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $992. These payments are higher than the average rents ($777) in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Fewer than one-quarter (22 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Among those who saved, the average contribution toward retirement was $4,825.

Twenty percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Of the 80 percent that were covered, two-thirds of insured providers (68 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Twenty-two percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and only 8 percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (97 percent) were also insured; three percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Only one provider not currently covered by health insurance had been covered in the previous year; she had been covered through a family member.

Figure 9. San Benito County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

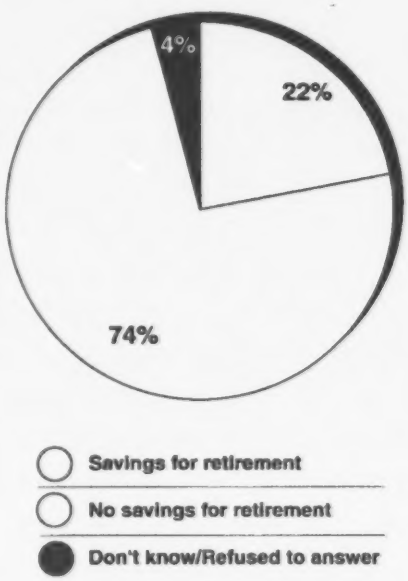
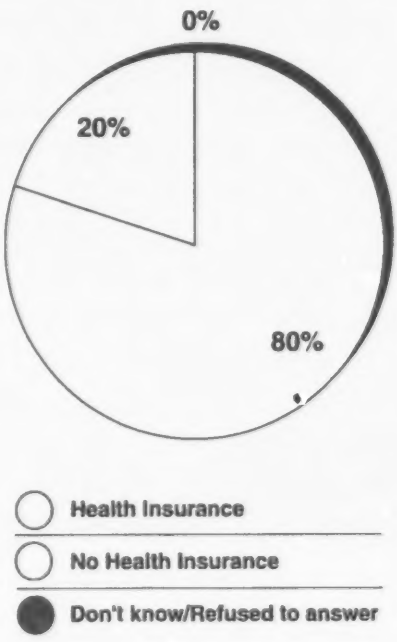


Figure 10. San Benito County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

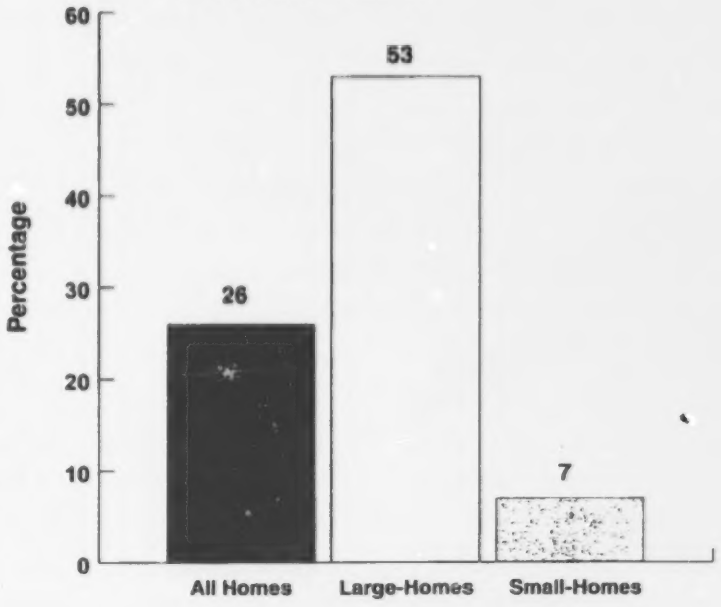
Twenty-six percent of the 46 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=12) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (53 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (7 percent) to employ assistants.[viii] Of the homes who employed assistance, all small homes employed one assistant, as did 80 percent of large homes. No homes employed more than two assistants. The average tenure for assistants was 3.3 years.

Assistants worked 31 hours per week on average. The median wage for assistants was $7.00 per hour, with 25 percent earning less than $7.00 per hour and none earning more than $10.00 per hour. Most assistants did not receive health coverage (71 percent) or other monetary benefits (e.g., partially or fully paid vacation, holidays or sick leave) as part of their compensation package.

In addition to paid assistants, 46 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Approximately one-third of the providers (30 percent) paid these helpers. Providers reported a mean hourly wage of $6.90 for substitutes. One-fifth of providers paid substitutes $9.00 per hour, while two-fifths paid them $6.00 per hour or less.

Nearly half (44 percent) of providers also had family members or other persons regularly assist them in taking care of children in their homes even though they were not being paid. In a typical week, family members or others assisted these providers in the care of children for an average of 15 hours.

Figure 11. San Benito County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



Conclusion

Family child care providers in this San Benito County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were a female workforce, and most were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care in their homes for several years, yet their child care earnings were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, over a fourth of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

More than one-half of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 39 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children. Although we do not understand why, neither small-home nor large-home providers as a group cared for as many children as they were licensed to accommodate.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook and Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in San Benito County and throughout the state.

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1 Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2 Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

3 For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

4 Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 10 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

Tests of Significance

i $t(44)=-3.08$, $p<.005$
ii $t(44)=2.19$, $p<.05$
iii $t(44)=-3.45$, $p<.01$
iv $X^2(1)=7.87$, $p<.01$
v $t(44)=1.97$, $p<.05$
vi $t(29)=-2.06$, $p<.05$
vii $t(27)=2.19$, $p<.05$
viii $X^2(1)=11.82$, $p<.0005$

To Reference This Report

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California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in San Francisco County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by

The Center for the Child Care Workforce

The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care providers demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state.
The following report concerns San Francisco County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

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Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related, college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to

increase the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in San Francisco County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventive health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.)

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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San Francisco County

San Francisco County, which has one of the nation's highest costs of living, poses particular challenges to young working families struggling to afford high housing and child care costs (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). Although the county experienced a seven percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, it lost many young families as a result of the cost of living. Still, San Francisco is currently home to over 770,000 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 59 percent of the 112,802 children under 14 have working parents [1];
- 57 percent of the 37,890 children 0-5 have working parents [1];
- 21 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 20 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

In response to the growing demand for infant and toddler care in particular, the local resource and referral agencies have worked to increase the number of spaces in family child care homes in the county. The number of spaces in family child care homes grew from 3,382 in 1998 to 6,663 in 2000. In 2000, there were 64 percent more licensed providers than in 1998. Sixty-one percent of parents' child care requests to resource and referral agencies are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

Influenced by years of effort by child care advocates, San Francisco has funded an array of child care initiatives through city and county funds in recent years to offer providers incentives to enter and stay in the field and to improve the quality of care. These include:

- Family Child Care Education Initiative, three bilingual training conferences for college credit on physical environment, business practices and early learning practices for family child care providers to augment existing courses offered through the City College of San Francisco;
- Family Child Care Provider Networks in several key neighborhoods that provide peer support and a structure through which providers can drive the agenda for creating a professional, regulatory, civic and economic climate that supports and rewards their success;
- Family Child Care Substitute Reimbursement Program, which reimburses costs incurred for substitute or respite child care helpers to allow family child care providers to participate in San Francisco's child care planning, training and capacity building efforts;
- The Infant/Toddler Capacity Building Project, which provides stipends to child care programs that care for infants and toddlers and achieve a standard of quality based on the ITERS[2] and FDCERS[2] quality assessment measures;
- San Francisco CARES (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability) program, which provides monetary incentives to encourage child care teachers and providers to stay within the child care field and further their education;
- Wages Plus and Family Child Care Wages Plus, two programs that augment and stabilize the wages of child care workers, moving them closer to a living wage.

In addition, programs getting underway include the Provider Health Benefits (PHB) program, which hopes to address the low availability and high cost of health insurance for individual providers by establishing a group purchasing pool and providing subsidies to cover premium costs for low-income providers. A program to fund infant/toddler capacity and support, the Infant/Toddler Initiative, is also being implemented.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agencies, 529 homes comprised the total population of licensed family child care providers in San Francisco County as of spring 2001. Our goal was to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the licensed home-based population in the county. We attempted to contact all licensed providers and succeeded at reaching 261, or a sample comprised of 49 percent of the provider population. Small homes comprised two-thirds of the sample (72 percent; n=188), with large homes (28 percent or n=73) making up the balance, closely representing the distribution of small and large homes (76 percent and 24 percent, respectively) in the county's overall provider population.

In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of the population is considered the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (49 percent of the county provider population; n=261) and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or

Table 1. San Francisco County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
San Francisco County licensed homes	529	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample*	517	97.7	100.0
Completed interview	261	49.3	50.5
Refused to participate	20		3.9
Out of business	26		5.0
Communication barrier	100		19.3
Unresolved number**	61		11.8
Unavailable, no contact made	20		3.9
Did not complete	25		4.8
Other	4		0.8

* Twelve providers were contacted for pilot interviews and were excluded from the final sample.
** "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

minus 4.32 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 4.32 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 5.21 percent for small-home providers and 7.48 percent for large-home providers. Due to our inability, however, to conduct the interviews in languages other than English and Spanish (as shown in Table 1), our sample unfortunately underrepresents a sizeable portion of the provider population (19 percent) who speak neither English nor Spanish.

All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 previous page for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. San Francisco County representatives specifically requested information about the extent to which providers relied upon unpaid helpers and/or family members to assist them in taking care of the children in their homes.

Data Collection

Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system ensured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering in the data.

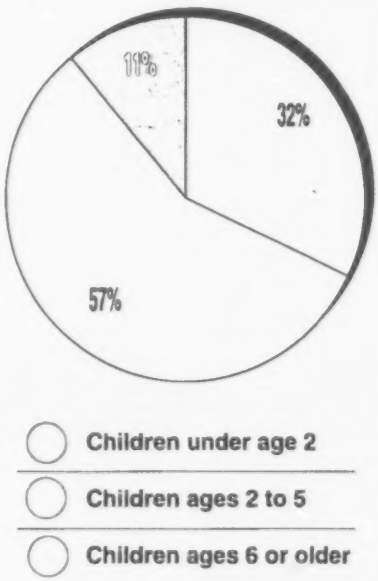
Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the workday to contact providers and when necessary, called the provider during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back family child care providers who requested to complete the interview in Spanish. Eighty-five percent (n=221) of the interviews were completed in English, and 15 percent were completed in Spanish (n=40). Small-home providers were more likely to be interviewed in Spanish than large-home providers.[1] Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 261 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for 2,063 children, over half of whom (57 percent; n= 1,180) were cared for in small homes, and the remainder of whom (43 percent; n= 883) were cared for in large homes. As indicated in Figure 1, most (85 percent; n= 1,824) were five years old or younger. Slightly more than half (57 percent) of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five, 32 percent were under the age of two, and only 11 percent were school-aged children.

Most providers cared for mixed-age groups. Eighty-five percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, and 86 percent were paid to care for children ages two to five. Only 37 percent were paid to care for school-aged children. Seventeen percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 36 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 53 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[ii] Large-home providers were also more likely to care for children in all age groups than were small-home providers.[iii]

Figure 1. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children they were licensed to serve (see Table 2). The reasons for this are unclear, since we were unable to ask providers why they typically cared for fewer than the permitted number of children. This finding suggests that the licensed capacity in the county was larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures

Table 2. San Francisco County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared For Weekly By Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [3]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=188)	8	7.00	0.72	2.29	3.26	0.73
Large-Home Providers (n=73)	14	12.55	0.45	3.10	7.62	1.38

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from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 4,994 slots in San Francisco County in 2001, compared to our weighted estimate of 4,397 children enrolled in licensed home care. This estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and of the distribution of small and large family child care homes in the county.

The majority of providers worked long hours. Fifty hours per week was the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Few providers (8.1 percent) worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only four percent worked 12 hours or less per week. Eight percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, one half of providers (50 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. Thirty percent of the sample reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more time each week caring for children (55 hours on average) than did small home providers (50 hours).[iv]

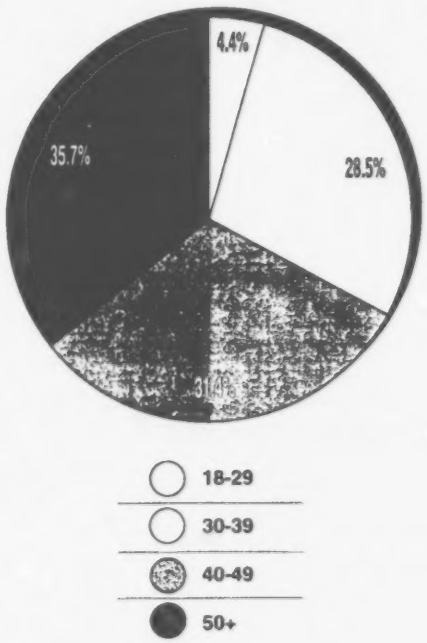
A substantial number of licensed providers in San Francisco County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Forty-nine percent of all providers reported serving at least one family receiving publicly-funded vouchers, which come from a variety of sources. Large-home providers (64 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (43 percent).[v] Nearly three-quarters of all providers (71 percent) participated in the federally-funded Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care.

Personal Characteristics of Providers [4]

Family child care providers in San Francisco County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only six of the providers interviewed for this study (2 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 46 (see Figure 2). Large-home providers were older (48 vs. 45) on average than small-home providers.[vi]

Three-quarters of providers were people of color. As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the provider population included a higher percentage of people of color than the county's overall adult population (2000 U.S. Census), but a similar percentage of people of

Figure 2. San Francisco County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



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color to that of the county's child population. The percentage of African American providers is greater than that of the African American county population and child population, while the percentage of Asian American providers is lower than that of the Asian American child population. White providers were more likely to have completed an associate degree or higher (56 percent) than were providers of color (20 percent).[vii]

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Forty-nine percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 85 percent and Spanish for 15 percent of the interviews. Twenty-seven percent of small-home providers and 25 percent of large-home providers were bilingual in Spanish and English. Three percent of providers were bilingual in Mandarin and English, and 4.5 percent were bilingual in Cantonese and English. Twenty percent of providers were bilingual in English and another language other than Chinese or Spanish. Russian, French, Vietnamese and Italian were among the other languages spoken by providers. Small-home providers were more likely than large-home providers to speak one of these other languages.[viii] According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 46 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, 12 percent are fluent in Spanish, and 26 percent are fluent in an Asian language. Fifty-one percent of providers identified English, 29 percent identified Spanish, and seven percent identified Mandarin or Cantonese as the spoken language that was easiest for them to understand. Ninety-one percent of providers spoke to children in English. Twenty-six percent spoke to children in Spanish, and four percent spoke to children in another language. While small-home providers were more likely to speak Spanish to children in their care than were large-home providers, large-home providers were more likely to speak a language other than English or Spanish to children in their care than were small-home providers.[ix] Providers who were not fluent in English or Spanish could not be interviewed, but it is likely that they speak to children in their native language.

More than half of the providers (57 percent) were married or living with a partner, and the remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Half of the providers (50 percent) in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (43 percent) or two children (37 percent). Forty-five percent of the providers were parents or guardians of children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 4. Forty-six percent of single providers were parents, and 35 percent had children five years old or younger. Providers operating large homes were more likely to be parents or guardians to children 18 years of age and younger than were small-home providers.[x]

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become licensed, prospective family child care providers are required by the State of California to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training. Nevertheless, many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Nearly three-quarters of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Small-home providers had completed, on average, less formal education than large-home providers.[xi] For example, 69 percent of small-home

Figure 3a. San Francisco County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

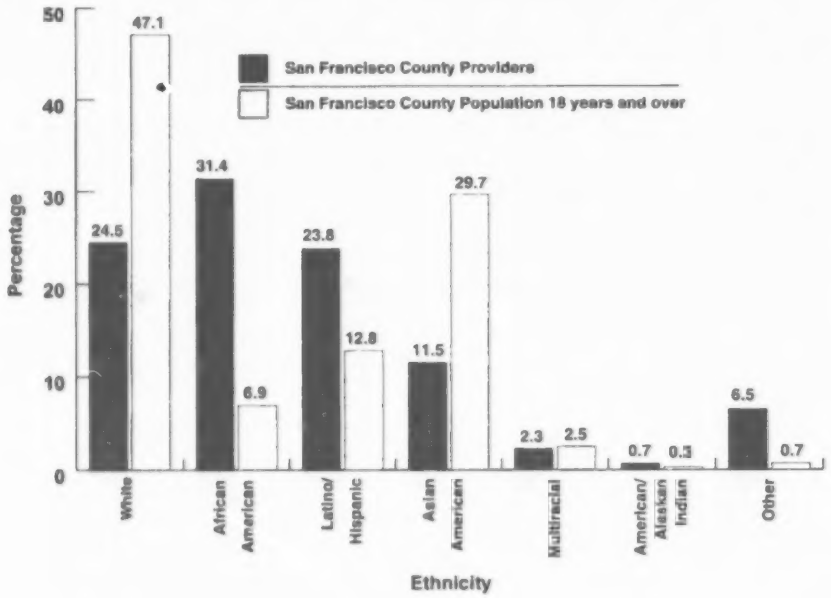


Figure 3b. San Francisco County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

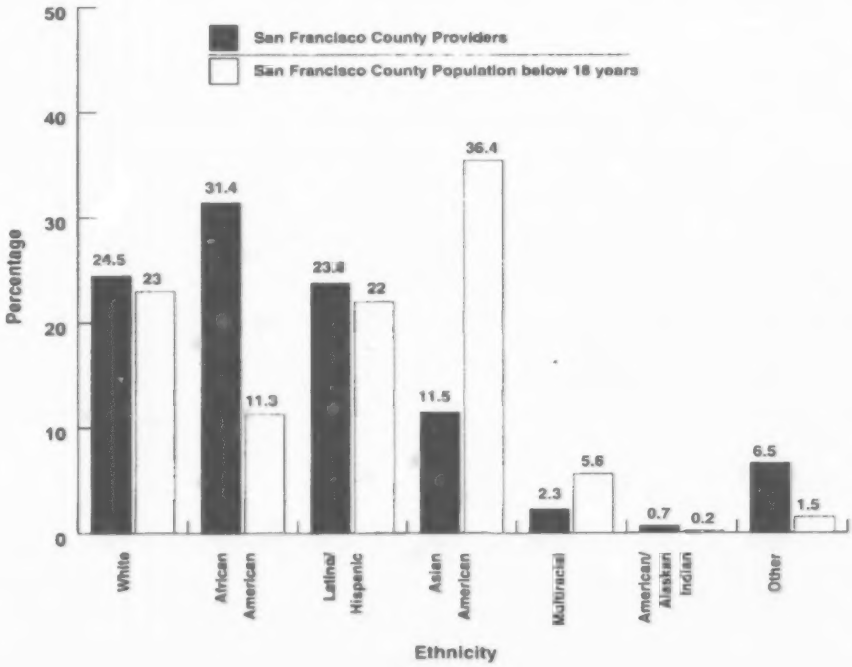
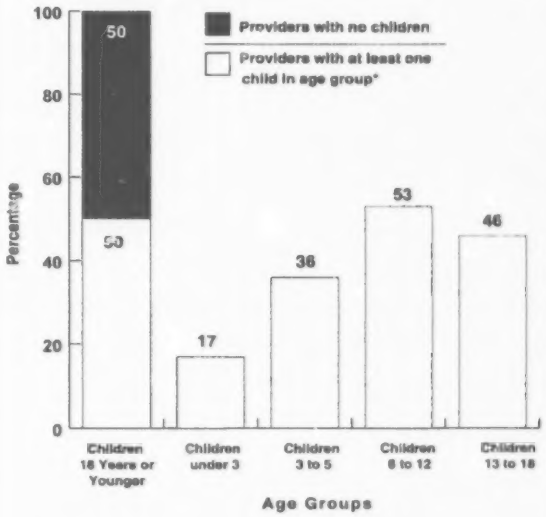
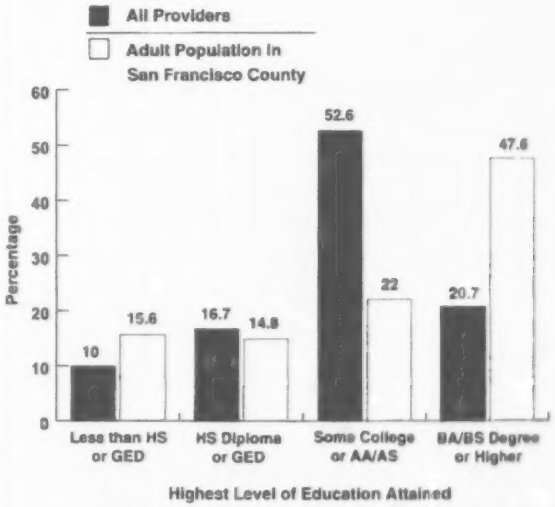


Figure 4. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentages add up to more than 100, since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

Figure 5. San Francisco County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County



providers had completed some college units, compared to 84 percent of large-home providers. Providers in San Francisco County had completed high school or a GED only (16.7 percent) at similar rates as San Francisco's overall adult population over 25 years old (15.6 percent). Providers had completed some college or an associate's degree (52.6 percent) at higher rates than the county's overall adult population (22 percent). Approximately 21 percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher, compared to almost 48 percent of the county's adult population as of 2000 (Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census). (See Figure 5). Thus, providers as a group were more likely to have completed some college, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in the county.

Among all providers, 57 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. Fifty percent of providers had completed early childhood education or child development college units within the last 12 months. As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c:

Table 3. San Francisco County: Highest Level of Education Completed by Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	10.0	25
HS Diploma or GED	16.7	42
Some college	44.6	112
AA/AS degree	8.0	20
BA/BS degree	17.1	43
MA/MS degree	2.0	5
Ph.D.	1.6	4
Total	**100.0**	**251**

- more than half of all providers (56 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- slightly fewer than one-quarter of all providers (22 percent) had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- fewer than one-quarter (16 percent) of all providers had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 73 percent of providers who had received some level of college education, 84 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the 34 providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, fifty-six percent had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among the full sample of providers, seven percent had completed a degree in early childhood education. Large-home providers (16 percent) were more likely to report completing a degree in early childhood education than small-home providers (four percent).[xii] Eleven providers in the sample (four percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Twenty percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year, and most (92 percent) had received college credit for them.

Figure 6a. San Francisco County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers

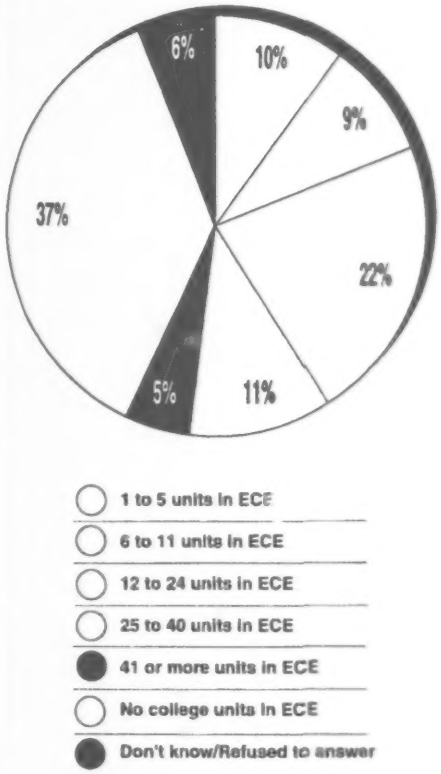


Figure 6b. San Francisco County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

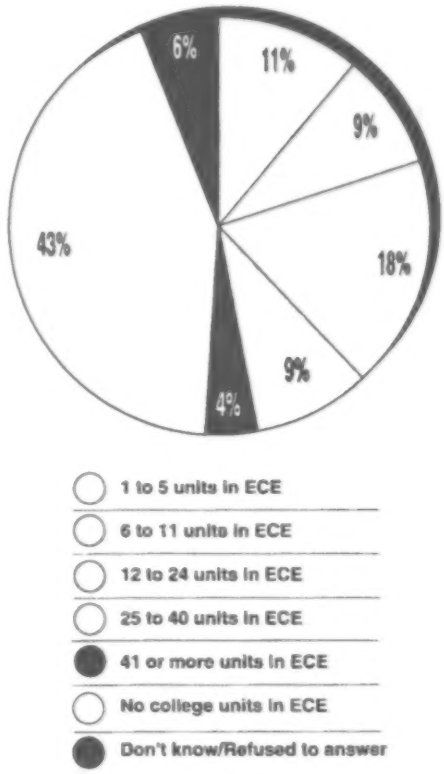


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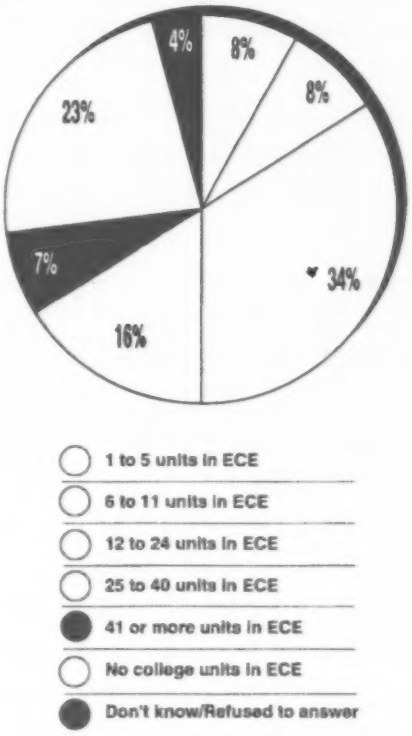
Figure 6c. San Francisco County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



Most providers in San Francisco County had also engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college credit. For example, 72 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 56 percent reported having 20 hours or more of such training. Sixty-one percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with 42 percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Forty-five percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training. Small-home providers were more likely than large-home providers to report participating in business-related, non-college training.[xiii]

Most providers in San Francisco County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 30 of the 261 providers (12 percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Forty providers (15 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) accredited their homes.

Family child care providers in San Francisco County are eligible to participate in the SF CARES program, a professional development program that provides monetary rewards for educational attainment and tenure in the field to those working with young children. The program had been in operation for approximately two years at the time the survey was conducted. Slightly over two-thirds (69 percent) were familiar with the program, and of those, 37 percent (or 25 percent of the total sample) were current participants. Seventeen percent had applied but were not currently participating. Large-home providers were more likely than small-home providers to participate in the program.[xiv] Providers with higher levels of formal education were more likely to have heard of and to participate in the CARES program.[xv] Providers who were CARES stipend recipients had completed more early childhood education units (24 units on average) than those who did not participate in CARES (8 units on average). There were no differences with respect to net child care income between providers who participated in the CARES program and those who did not.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

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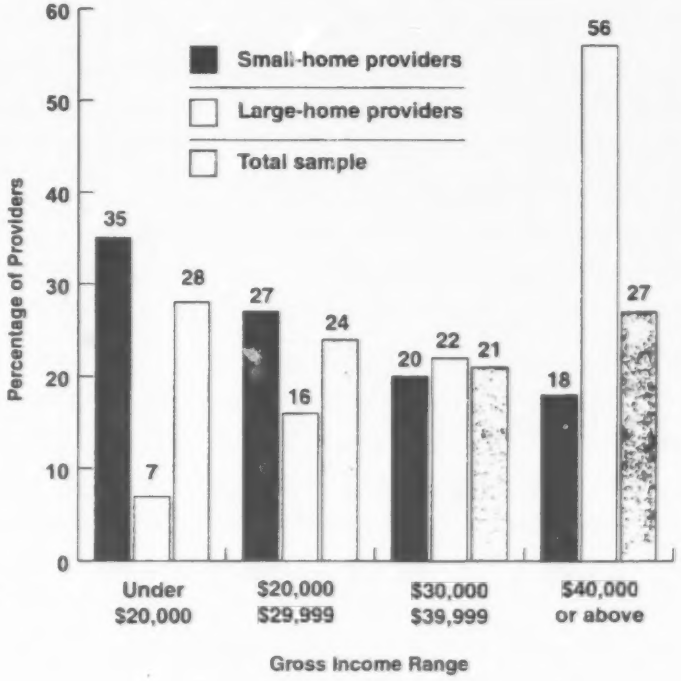
Career Longevity

In this study, San Francisco County providers were very experienced, having worked an average of 8.7 years in their home businesses; only 10.4 percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (6.7 years) than large-home providers (13.6 years).[xvi] White providers averaged greater tenure (11 years) than providers of other ethnicities (8 years).[xvii] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure than those who rented their homes.[xviii] Tenure was also related to earnings from child care; those with less than five years of experience in family child care earned significantly less ($9,232) than those with five or more years of experience ($14,441).[xix]

Figure 7. San Francisco County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



Economic Status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $25,000 to $29,999 per year, while large-home providers reported higher average gross earnings ranging from $40,000 to $44,999.[xx] The average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $30,000 and $34,999. Only half of the providers in the sample reported net earnings. Net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred to operate a child care businesses in one's home, were also lower for small-home providers than for large-home providers. Small-home providers reported average net earnings of $9,902 per year, compared to $18,592 for large-home providers. Starting salaries for K-12 teachers, who typically have more education but work a much shorter day and year, averaged $38,000 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in San Francisco County were $41,321 and high-end earnings were $64,326. More than half (53 percent) of providers reported gross earnings of less than $30,000 per year. Twenty-seven percent reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business (see Figure 7). Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children receiving subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Among those who reported household income and earnings, fifty-six percent lived in households with two or more adults contributing to the household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $30,000 and $34,999, and large-home providers reported an average annual household income between $45,000 and $49,999.[xxiii] Thirty-two percent of those providing financial information reported having income from sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[5] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the San Francisco County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Forty percent of providers in San Francisco County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they owned their own homes (see Figure 8b)[xxiii] and were older.[xxiv] Large-home providers, who generally earn more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.[xxv]

Half of the family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 35 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Large-home providers (74 percent) were more likely to be homeowners than were small-home providers (40 percent).[xxvi] Large-home providers who were renters also spent more than small-home providers on housing costs.[xxvii] Renters reported lower household incomes than homeowners.[xxviii]

Figure 8a. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

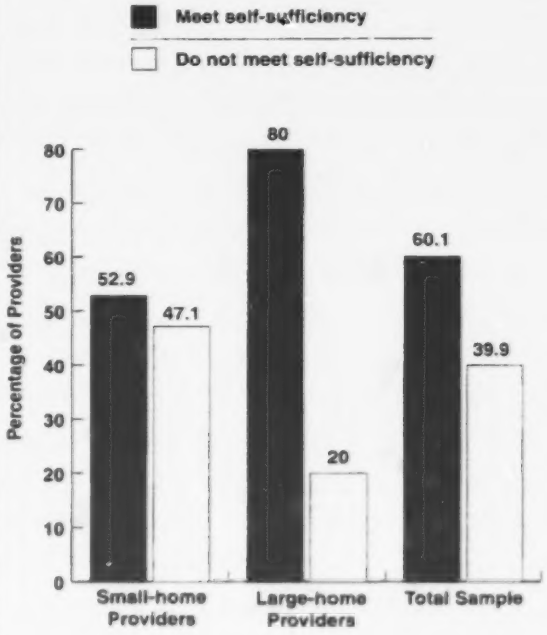
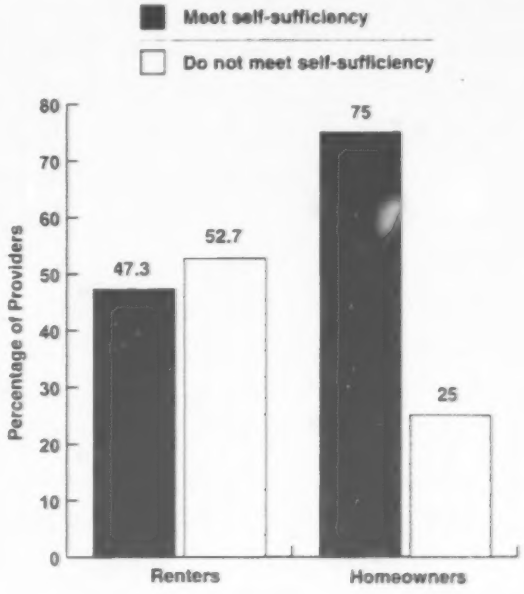


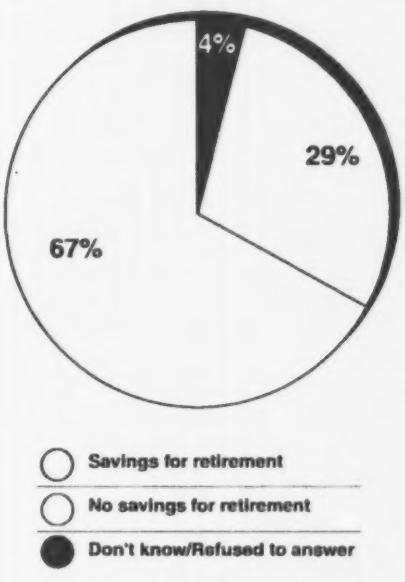
Figure 8b. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,497. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $1,274, similar to the average rent in the county ($1,362) for a two-bedroom apartment (California Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

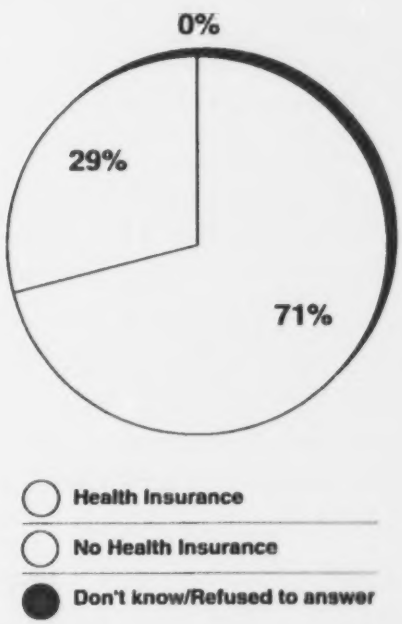
Fewer than one-third (30 percent) of providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Large-home providers were more likely to report having saved for retirement than were small-home providers.[xxix] Among those who saved, the average contribution toward retirement was $5,243.

Figure 9. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement



Twenty-nine percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan covering all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Large-home providers were more likely to have current health insurance than were small-home providers.[xxx] Of the 71 percent currently covered, 45 percent were covered through a family member, such as a spouse or partner. Forty-two percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and only 9.5 percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (90 percent) were also insured; twenty-one percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, only six percent had been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

Figure 10. San Francisco County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



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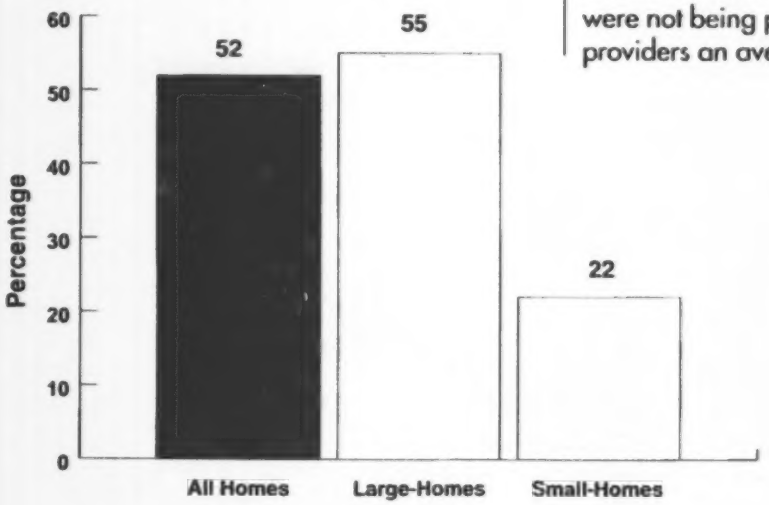
Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Fifty-two percent of the 261 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=137) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (63 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (37 percent) to employ assistants.[xxxii] Large homes also hired more assistants (1.58), on average, than did small homes (1.19).[xxxiii] Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of homes employed one assistant, approximately one quarter (29 percent) employed two assistants, and six percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for assistants working in large homes was four years, compared to 2.3 years for those employed in small homes.[xxxiv]

Figure 11. San Francisco County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



Among homes that reported employing them, assistants worked 30 hours per week on average. The median wage for assistants was $9.00 per hour, with thirty-one percent earning $7.00 or less per hour and twenty-three percent earning $10.00 per hour or more. Assistants in small homes earned less ($8.38 on average) that their counterparts in large homes ($9.53). The vast majority of assistants (81 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Thirty-one percent of assistants received other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including such things as partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

In addition to paid assistants, 42 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Approximately half of the providers (51 percent) paid these helpers. Providers reported a median hourly wage of $8.00 for substitutes. One-fifth of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while one-quarter (24 percent) paid them $6.00 per hour or less. Forty-one percent of providers reported that family members or other persons regularly assisted them in taking care of children in their homes even though they were not being paid. Unpaid helpers assisted providers an average of 13 hours per week.

Conclusion

Family child care providers in this San Francisco County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women of color, and the majority were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care programs in their homes for several years, yet their earnings from child care were low, particularly in light of their tenure in the field, their long work week and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, two-fifths of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families. The high cost of housing in San Francisco and the low earnings of providers raise serious concerns about the ongoing supply of family child care providers and their ability to survive economically.

Nearly three-quarters of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 57 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children. And only a small portion of providers who had earned college credits were participating in the SF CARES program and benefiting from the monetary awards and professional development opportunities available through that initiative. Although we do not understand why, neither small-home nor large-home providers as a group enrolled as many children as they were licensed to accommodate.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is key to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for other working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages and is increasingly comprised of a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center. 2001; Whitebook & Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions are driven by concern about child care and emphasize child care's essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge the perspectives both of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and of child care providers striving to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Data from this report will hopefully provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such initiatives would, ideally, reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in San Francisco County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1 Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2 The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) was designed to assess group programs for children from birth to 2 years of age.

The Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS) was designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home.

3 Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

4 For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

5 Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 13 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in San Francisco County*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(92)=4.82$, $p<.001$
ii	$t(259)=-9.71$, $p<.001$
iii	children under age 2 ($t(106)=-2.637$, $p<.05$); children 2 to 5 ($t(109)=-7.936$, $p<.001$); children 6 or older ($t(95)=-2.375$, $p<.05$)
iv	$t(232)=-2.45$, $p<.02$
v	$X^2(1)=8.04$, $p<.05$
vi	$t(247)=-2.033$, $p<.05$
vii	$X^2(1)=31.03$, $p<.00001$
viii	$X^2(1)=3.97$, $p<.05$
ix	speak Spanish $X^2(1)=4.86$, $p<.03$; other language $X^2(1)=3.82$, $p<.05$
x	$X^2(1)=5.68$, $p<.05$
xi	$t(117)=-3.55$, $p<.001$
xii	$X^2(1)=12.59$, $p<.001$
xiii	$X^2(1)=3.76$, $p<.05$
xiv	$X^2(1)=10.34$, $p<.001$
xv	heard $t(177)=3.61$, $p<.001$; participate $t(259)=2.21$, $p<.05$
xvi	$F(1,257)=48.55$, $p<.0001$
xvii	$t(258)=3.08$, $p<.01$
xviii	$t(204)=-5.31$, $p<.001$
xix	$t(109)=-1.98$, $p<.05$
xx	$t(68)=-5.43$, $p<0001$
xxi	$t(109)=-3.10$, $p<.002$
xxii	$F(1,191)=25.77$, $p<.0001$
xxiii	$X^2(1)=14.83$, $p<.0001$;
xxiv	$t(183)=2.96$, $p<.01$
xxv	$X^2(1)=11.24$, $p<.001$
xxvi	$X^2(2)=23.61$, $p<.0001$
xxvii	$t(16)=-3.23$, $p<.01$
xxviii	$F(2,188)=6.16$, $p<.003$
xxix	$X^2(1)=6.56$, $p<.01$
xxx	$X^2(1)=4.285$, $p<.05$
xxxi	$X^2(1)=63.25$, $p<.00001$
xxxii	$t(94)=-3.46$, $p<.001$
xxxiii	$t(131)=-2.27$, $p<.02$

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California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in San Mateo County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns San Mateo County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

ED 463 579

Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related, college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the

financing and funding of services, and to increase the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in San Mateo County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of whom are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.)

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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San Mateo County

San Mateo County, a center of the technology industry, is also known for its high cost of living. Soaring home prices have contributed to many family child care providers closing or moving out of the county because they were unable to find housing. (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a nine percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to more than 700,000 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 66 percent of the 128,020 children under 14 have working parents[1];
- 63 percent of the 54,525 children 0-5 have working parents[1];
- 9 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 14 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

Despite growing demand, there was no growth in the number of family child care homes between 1998 and 2000. There has, however, been a modest growth in the number of spaces available in family child care homes (13 percent), but an overall decrease in spaces for infants and toddlers in the county (-23 percent). Ninety-three percent of parents' child care requests to resource and referral agencies are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To improve the quality of care and to offer providers incentives to stay in the field, child care advocates have been working with the Children and Families First Commission of San Mateo County to establish a number of support services and programs for providers. San Mateo has initiated the SamCARES program (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability), offering stipends to providers to reward and encourage their professional development. (This program, however, began after our data were collected.) The Career Development Center offers career and employment counseling, assistance and support in developing and achieving career goals, training opportunities, and "Career Ca$h Incentives" for meeting career goals.

The Cañada College Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) Department receives funding from the Children and Families First Commission to increase recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and providers in San Mateo County by:

- providing textbooks for Cañada College ECE/CD students;
- offering bilingual tutorial support to all ECE core classes;
- developing a home-based child care certificate program (12 units);
- creating a training model that incorporates family child care provider co-trainers and consultants;
- establishing a family child care mentor program; and
- developing a public awareness campaign to increase the visibility and prominence of issues that are important to families and children.

Staff members from the Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County, Inc. (the local resource and referral agency) and the local child care planning council are also leading a Child Care Action Campaign, with the goal of increasing the licensed supply of child care by 10 percent over the next five years through supporting workforce development and facilities development initiatives. In addition, a Neighborhood Child Care Network employs family child care home providers in six San Mateo County cities.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the Child Care Coordinating Council, 680 homes comprised the total population of licensed family child care providers in San Mateo County as of spring 2001. Our goal was to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the county's licensed, home-based population. We attempted to contact all licensed providers and succeeded at reaching 337, or 50 percent of the provider population. Small homes made up approximately two-thirds (64 percent) of the sample (n=217), with large homes (36 percent or n=120) making up the balance of the sample, closely representing the distribution of small and large homes (67 and 33 percent respectively) in the county's overall provider population.

In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of the population is considered the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (50 percent of the county provider population; n=337) and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 3.79 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 3.79 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 4.83 percent for small-home providers and 6.06 percent for large-home providers.

All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where large and small home providers differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal decline rates.

Table 1. San Mateo County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
San Mateo County licensed homes	680	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample*	657	96.6	100.0
Completed interview	337	49.6	51.3
Refused to participate	92		14.0
Out of business	72		11.0
Communication barrier	18		2.7
Unresolved number**	95		14.5
Unavailable, no contact made	11		1.7
Did not complete	29		4.4
Other	3		0.5

* Twenty-three providers were contacted for pilot interviews and were excluded from the final sample.
** "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. San Mateo County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers enrolled as many children as they would like, and if not, what prevented them from doing so.

Data Collection

Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back family child care providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Ninety percent (n=302) of the interviews were completed in English, and ten percent were completed in Spanish (n=35). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

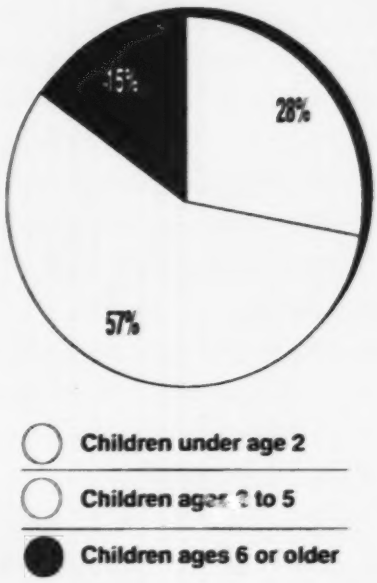
Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 337 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for more than two thousand (2,614) children, approximately half of whom (52 percent; n= 1,354) were cared for in large homes, and the remainder of whom (48 percent; n= 1,260) were cared for in small homes. As indicated in Figure 1, most of the children (86 percent; n= 2,249) were five years old or younger; more than half (57 percent) of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five. School-age children comprised a small portion of the population using licensed family child care.

Most often, providers cared for mixed-age groups. Eighty-two percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 89 percent were paid to care for children

ages two to five, while only 40 percent were paid to care for school-age children. Nineteen percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 25 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 61 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).

Figure 1. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). This finding suggests, however, that the licensed capacity in the county was substantially larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 6,772 slots in San Mateo County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 5,676 children enrolled in licensed home care. Our estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and on weighted calculations reflecting the total percentage of small and large family child care homes in the county. Seventy-one percent of providers reported having as many children enrolled in their programs as they would like. The following reasons were given by providers for explaining their dissatisfaction with enrollment levels: no other families interested at this time (29 percent); space not adequate for children or landlord won't permit (18 percent); not able to hire anyone to help take care of more children (20 percent); and licensing too difficult (17 percent).

Table 2. San Mateo County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared for Weekly by Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=217)	8	6.64	.82	2.06	2.92	0.84
Large-Home Providers (n=120)	14	12.20	.58	2.55	7.36	1.71

The majority of providers worked long hours. Forty-nine hours per week was the mean number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Eleven percent worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only three percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Five percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, approximately two-thirds of providers (68 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. One quarter of the sample reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more time each week preparing (15 hours on average) than did small-home providers (12 hours on average).[ii]

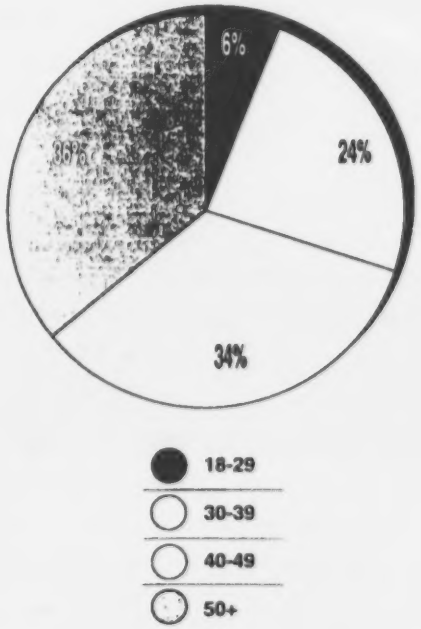
A sizable minority of licensed providers in San Mateo County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Nearly one-third of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly-funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (42 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (26 percent).[iii] Half of all providers (51 percent) participated in the federally-funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (67 percent) were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (42 percent).[iv]

Personal Characteristics of Providers [3]

Family child care providers in San Mateo County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only three of the providers interviewed for this study (1 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 45 (see Figure 2).

Approximately 11 percent of the providers were African Americans, with the remainder being White providers. As indicated in Figures 3a and b, there was a similar percentage of White providers in the county in comparison to the adult population in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census), but a higher percentage of White providers than is characteristic of the child population as a whole. The provider population was also more likely to include African Americans than was characteristic of either the adult or child population. The percentage of Asian American and Latino providers in the county was small in comparison with the child

Figure 2. San Mateo County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



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population of these ethnic groups. There were no differences in educational levels achieved between providers of color and White providers.

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Twenty-nine percent of providers were bilingual in Spanish and English, and 25 percent spoke another language besides Spanish or English, with Tagalog being the third most commonly spoken language. According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 40 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 18 percent are fluent in Spanish. Ninety-six percent of providers spoke to children in English, and twenty-one percent spoke to children in Spanish.

Approximately three-quarters of the providers (77 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Fifty-six percent of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Providers were more likely to be parents or legal guardians if they were married or living with a partner.[v] Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (30 percent) or two children (49 percent); over one-third (35 percent) of providers had children five years old or younger, while over four-fifths (85 percent) had older children (See Figure 4). Forty-four percent of single providers were parents.

Figure 3a. San Mateo County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

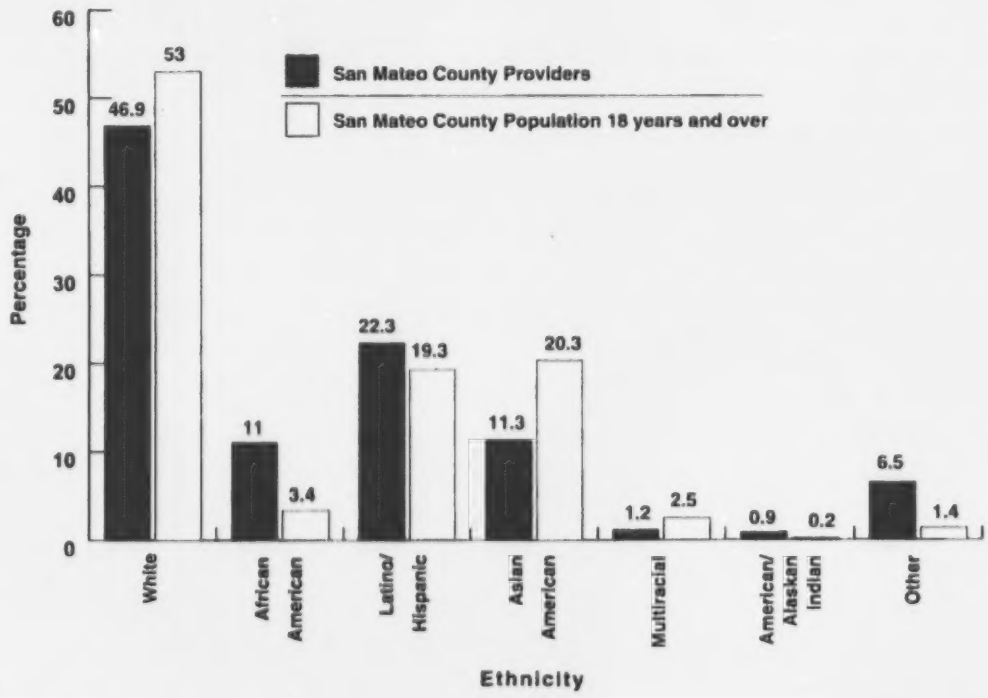


Figure 3b. San Mateo County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

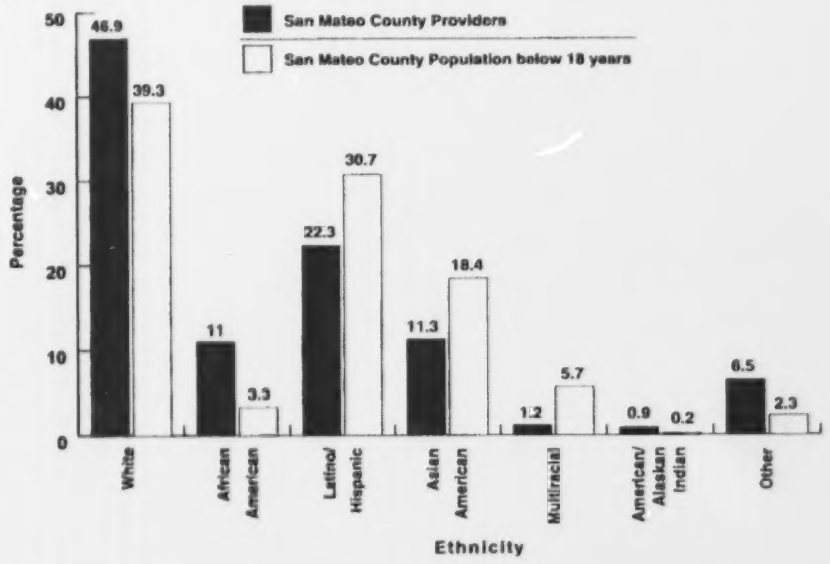
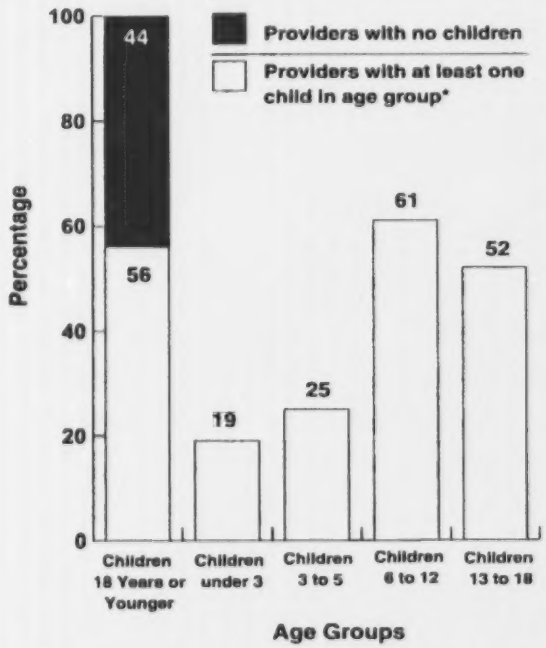


Figure 4. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentage may add up to more than 100 since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become licensed, prospective family child care providers are required by the State of California to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Compared to the overall adult population of San Mateo County, providers were equally likely to have completed high school or a GED only (20 percent, vs. 18 percent), more likely to have completed some college or an associate's degree (51 percent, vs. 30 percent), and less likely to have earned a college degree or higher (23 percent vs. 39 percent). (Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census). (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. San Mateo County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County

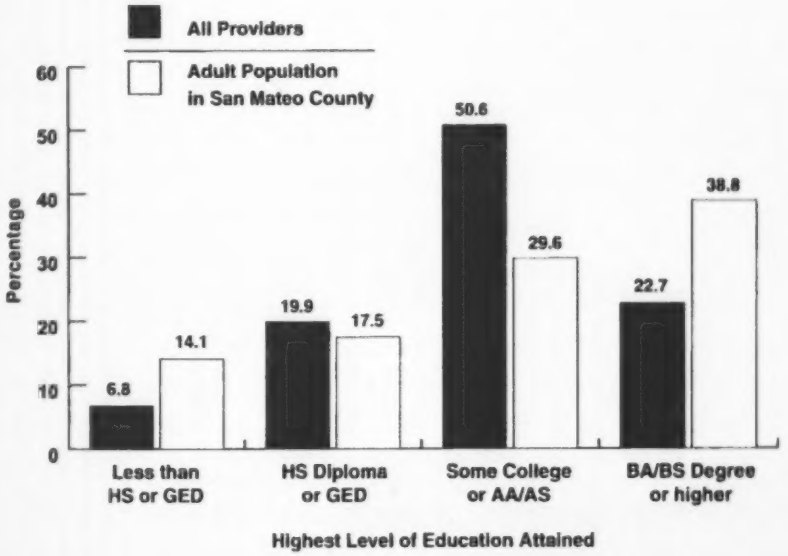


Table 3. San Mateo County: Highest Level of Education Completed by Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	6.8	22
HS Diploma or GED	19.9	64
Some college	42.5	137
AA/AS degree	8.1	26
BA/BS degree	19.6	63
MA/MS degree	2.8	9
Ph.D.	0.3	1
Total	**100.0**	**322**

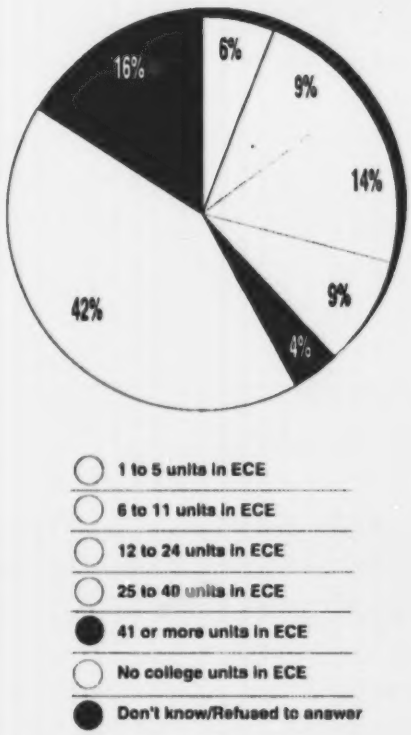
Among all providers, 57 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c:

- among all providers, large-home providers were likely to have completed more units of college credit than small-home providers;[vi]
- over half of all providers (57 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- less than one-fifth of all providers (14 percent) had completed 12 to 24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- less than one-fifth of all providers (13 percent) had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and

- among the 73 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 77 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the 35 providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, 54 percent had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers, six percent had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Thirteen providers (four percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Six percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year.

Figure 6a. San Mateo County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers



Many providers in San Mateo County have engaged in work-related training that did not carry college credit: 65 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 58 percent reported engaging in 20 hours or more of such training. Fifty-five percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with 54 percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Thirty-four percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in San Mateo County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 27 of the 337 providers

Figure 6b. San Mateo County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

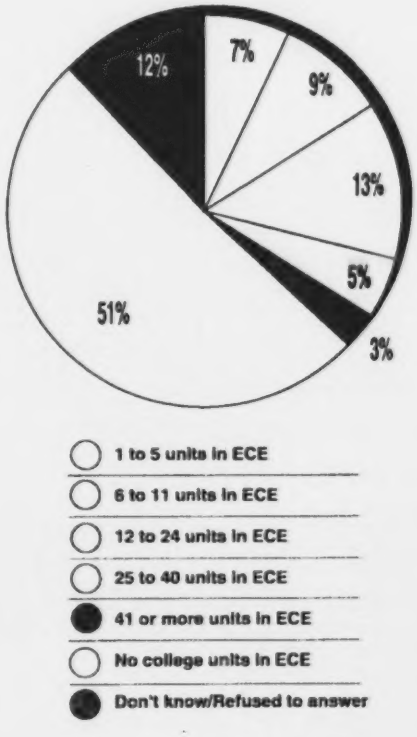


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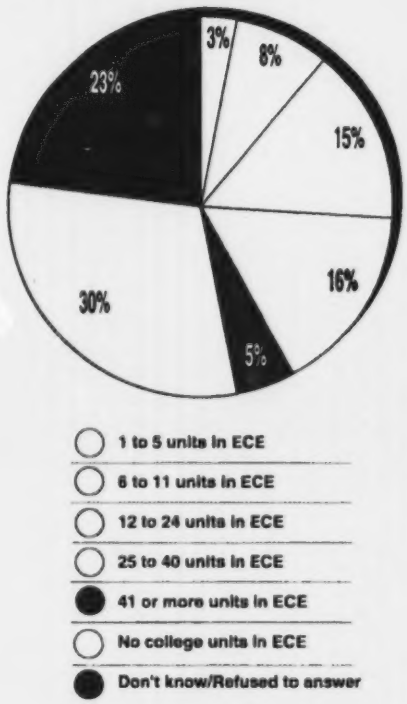
Figure 6c. San Mateo County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



(eight percent), for example, had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

San Mateo County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 11 years in their home businesses; only 4.5 percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported a shorter average tenure in family child care (10 years) than large-home providers (13 years).[vii] Small-home providers (7 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (0) to have been operating a child care business for a year or less.[viii] White providers averaged greater tenure (12.1 years) than providers of color (9.8 years). Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure than those who rented their homes. Tenure was also related to earnings from child care; those with less than one year experience earned significantly less than those with one to five years, five to ten years, and ten or more years of experience. Providers with one to five years experience earned less than providers with ten or more years of experience.[xi]

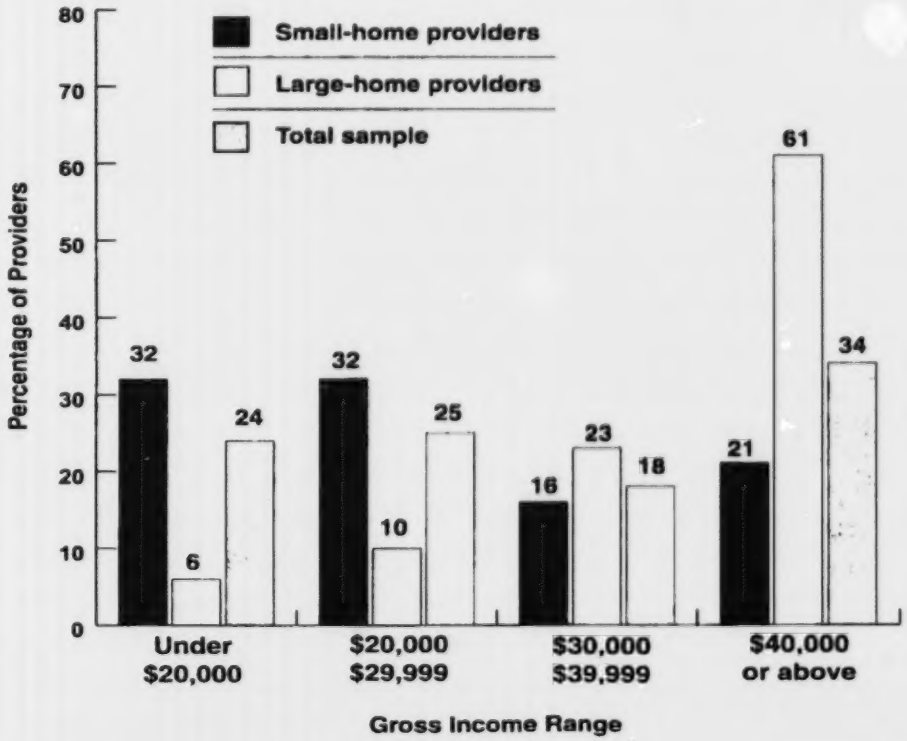
Economic Status

Over one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $25,000 to $29,999 per year, while large-home providers reported higher average gross earnings ranging from $45,000 to $49,999. The average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $30,000 and $34,999. Net earnings[4], which reflect the expenses incurred to operate their child care businesses in a home,

were also lower for small-home providers (average $10,719) than for large-home providers (average $17,408). Starting salaries for K-12 teachers, who typically have more education but who work a much shorter day and year, averaged $29,385 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in San Mateo County were $53,789 and high-end earnings were $81,508. Nearly a quarter of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year, and three-fifths (62 percent) reported net earnings of less than $15,000 per year from their child care work. Approximately one-third reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from their child care business (see Figure 7). Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children receiving subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Among those who reported household income and earnings, three-quarters lived in households with two or more adults contributing to their household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $40,000 and $45,000. Large-home providers reported living in households with a higher average annual income, between $50,000 and $55,000. Sixty percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

Figure 7. San Mateo County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



The self-sufficiency standard[5] is a measure of economic well-being based on the size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the self-sufficiency wage within a county (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). In San Mateo County, a self-sufficiency wage for a single adult is $22,812 per year; for a family of three with one wage earner, one preschooler and one school-age child, an income of $51,143 a year is needed to meet basic needs for food, clothing, housing, transportation and medical expenses.

Twenty-seven percent of providers in San Mateo County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they owned their own homes (see Figure 8b), were older, and had higher gross earnings from their child care business. Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 61 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,655. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $1,515. These payments are slightly higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect the rapidly rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Figure 8a. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

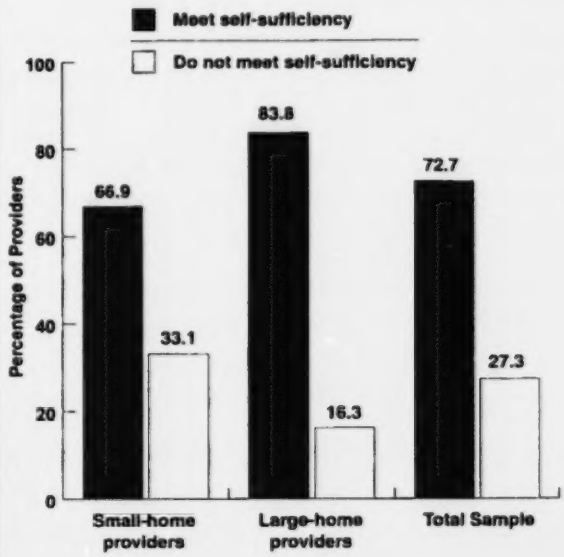


Figure 8b. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

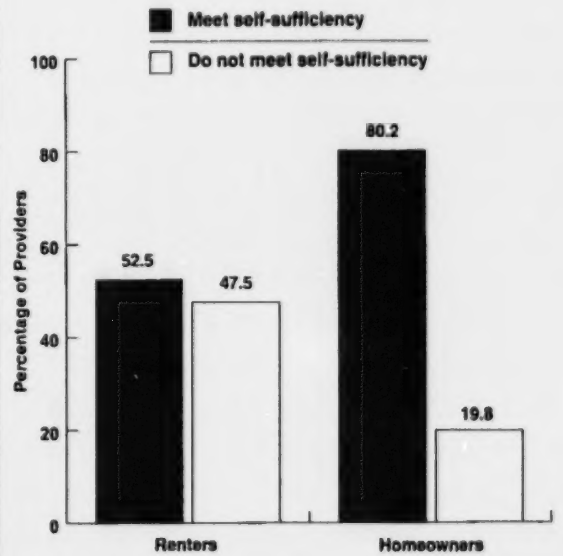


Figure 9. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

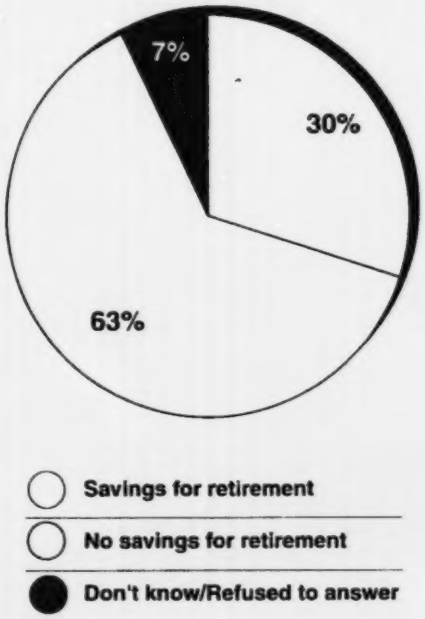
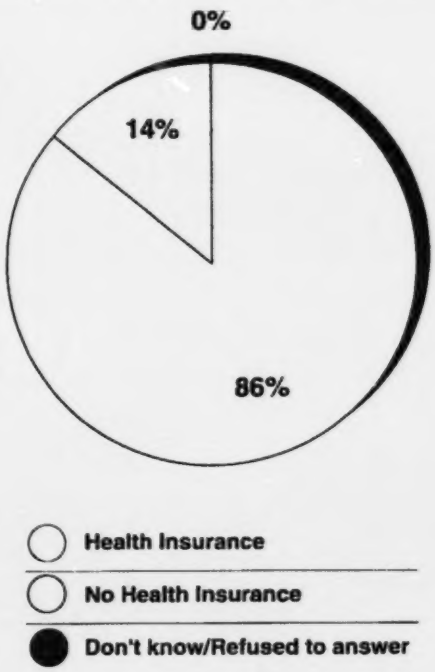


Figure 10. San Mateo County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status

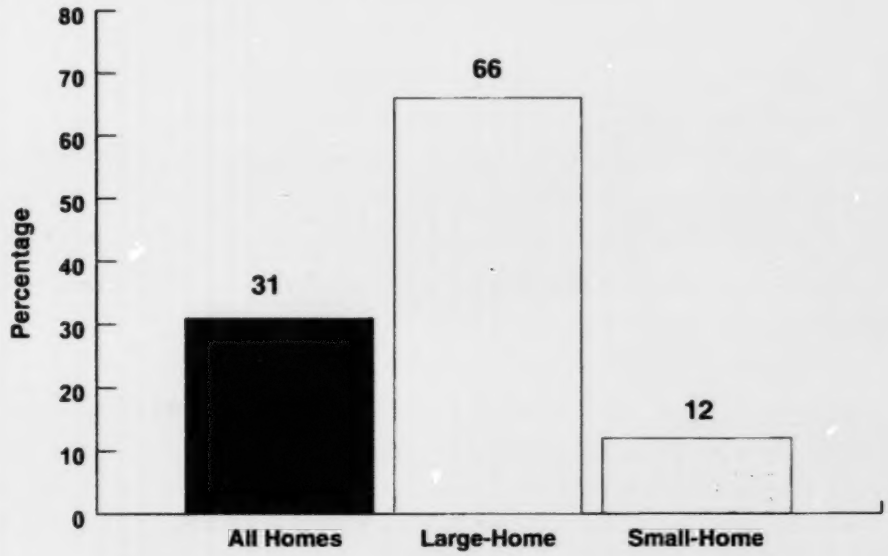


Only one-third (32 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Among those who had saved, the average contribution toward retirement was $8,044. Fourteen percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or some other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Of the 86 percent that were covered, two-thirds of insured providers (66 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Thirty-six percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and only five percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (96 percent) were also insured; seven percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, about 25 percent had been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Thirty-one percent of the 337 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=105) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if more than eight children are enrolled, large homes (66 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (12 percent) to employ assistants. Large homes also hired more assistants (1.75), on average, than did small homes (1.19). Over half (55 percent) of those

Figure 11. San Mateo County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



homes employed one assistant, approximately one third (35 percent) employed two assistants, and 10 percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for assistants working in large homes was 3.68 years, compared to 2.15 years for those employed in small homes.

Among homes that reported employing them, assistants worked 25 hours per week on average. The mean wage for assistants was $9.25 per hour, but average wages were higher ($9.47 per hour) in large homes than in small homes ($8.20 per hour). Twenty-eight percent of assistants earned less than $7.00 per hour, with twenty-seven percent earning $11.00 per hour or more. The vast majority of assistants (86 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Forty-one percent of assistants received other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

In addition to paid assistants, 39 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Large-home providers (50 percent) were more likely than small-home providers (33 percent) to have assistants available when they were ill. Approximately half of the providers (46 percent) paid these helpers, although large-home providers (55 percent) were significantly more likely to pay substitutes than were small-home providers (38 percent). Providers reported a mean hourly wage of $9.19 for substitutes. About half of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while 27 percent paid them $6.25 per hour or less.

Conclusion

Family child care providers in this San Mateo County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women, and the majority were parents, often of very young children. Most had been operating child care programs in their homes for several years. Yet their earnings from child care were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, slightly more than one-quarter of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

Nearly three-quarters of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, over three-quarters had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education, however, were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook & Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in San Mateo County and throughout the state.

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1 Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2 Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

3 For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

4 Note: Another survey of family child care providers, *A profile of the San Mateo County child care workforce* (Bellm, Burton, Duff & Laverty, 2002) was conducted during the spring of 2001, the same period in which our study occurred. The *Profile* focused on a sample of 105 providers, 67 of whom (63 percent) provided information about their earnings from child care. The *Profile* reported higher net earnings from child care businesses for providers than those reported in the current study. There are several explanations for these divergent findings. Differences between the two samples, as well as the fact that a large number of providers failed to report their earnings from child care in both studies, may play a role in the discrepant findings. Also different methods were used in both studies to determine net income. In the current study, providers were asked to estimate their earnings from their child care business when taking expenses into account. In the *Profile*, net incomes were calculated from providers' reports by subtracting direct business expenses, business use of home deductions, assistants' yearly salary and providers' costs for substitute (respite) care from gross income reported from child care businesses. We therefore caution readers in generalizing from either report with respect to providers' net income from their child care businesses.

5 Note: Twenty-nine percent of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 11 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(173)=-12.61$, $p< .001$
ii	$t(305)=-2.46$, $p<.01$
iii	$X^2(1)=8.13$, $p<.01$
iv	$X^2(1)=18.9$, $p<.001$
v	$X^2(1)=6.67$, $p<.01$
vi	$t(131)=-2.31$, $p<.05$
vii	$t(335)=-3.65$, $p<.0001$
viii	$X^2(1)=8.68$, $p<.003$
ix	$t(311)=2.65$, $p<.01$
x	$t(167)=-4.45$, $p<.001$
xi	$F(3,213)=9.74$, $p<.0001$
xii	$t(70)=-2.53$, $p<.05$
xiii	$X^2(1)=17.41$, $p<.00003$
xiv	$t(225)=3.04$, $p<.01$
xv	$t(172)=9.14$, $p<.001$
xvi	$X^2(1)=7.50$, $p<.01$
xvii	$X^2(1)=104$, $p<.000001$
xviii	$t(81)=-3.91$, $p<.0001$
xix	$t(72)=-2.89$, $p<.005$
xx	$t(132)=-2.00$, $p<.05$
xxi	$X^2(1)=9.71$, $p<.002$
xxii	$X^2(1)=3.77$, $p<.05$

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in San Mateo County.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

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California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Santa Cruz County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns Santa Cruz County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org

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Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage-an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school–seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; Cost, *Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al.,1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to

increase the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in Santa Cruz County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.) Large-home providers must also have an assistant.

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz County's growing population of commuters working in the high technology industry has led to a demand for affordable, high quality child care, while also making it more difficult to provide such care. Many parents commute from Santa Cruz to Silicon Valley, and need flexible child care arrangements that accommodate their long workdays. Santa Cruz County also remains an agricultural community, particularly in the southern part of the county, with a large population of Head Start-eligible migrant families who mostly use family child care. But the scarcity of affordable housing, caused in large measure to the influx of new, relatively affluent residents, has pushed out many child care providers (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced an 11 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to nearly 255,602 people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 60 percent of the 46,808 children under 14 have working parents;[1]
- 55 percent of the 18,739 children 0-5 have working parents;[1]
- 23 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 23 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

Despite growing demand, the number of spaces in family child care homes increased by only one percent between 1998 and 2000, and the actual number of homes decreased by 9 percent during that period, from 380 to 346. Yet 82 percent of parents' child care requests to the resource and referral agency are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To improve the quality of care and to offer providers incentives to stay in the field, the County Children's and Family Commission launched a CARES (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability) program in spring 2001. The program provides monetary stipends to family child providers and center-based staff to reward and encourage their professional development. There are two active family child care associations serving the county, and a family child care network operated through Cabrillo College that provides services and support to participating providers. The resource and referral agency offers business training workshops to providers and is working to increase the family child care provider supply. Local Proposition 10 (tobacco tax) dollars are being used to help family child care homes accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care Providers to become re-accredited. Child care advocates have used information from the Local Investment in Child Care project, which showed the economic impact of child care in the county, to develop Child Care Ventures, a collaboration of business, government and community organizations promoting understanding of child care as a vital, sustainable part of the local economy (CCCRRN, 2001).

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agency, there were 331 licensed family child care providers in Santa Cruz County as of spring 2001. Our goal was to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the licensed home-based population in the county. We attempted to contact all licensed providers and succeeded at reaching 224, or a 68 percent sample of the provider population. Small homes comprised two-thirds

(56 percent) of the sample (n=125), with large homes (44 percent; n=99) making up the balance, closely representing the distribution of small and large homes (57 percent and 43 percent, respectively) in the county population of providers.

In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of a population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (68 percent of the county provider population; n=224) and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 3.72 percentage points. In other words, our sample may deviate 3.72 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 5.07 percent for small-home providers and 5.46 percent for large-home providers.

All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;

Table 1. Santa Cruz County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
Santa Cruz County licensed homes	331	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample*	319	96.4	100.0
Completed interview	224	67.7	70.2
Refused to participate	9		2.8
Out of business	16		5.0
Communication barrier	3		0.9
Unresolved number**	35		11.0
Unavailable, no contact made	7		2.2
Did not complete	18		5.7
Other	7		2.2

* Twelve providers were contacted for pilot interviews and were excluded from the final sample.
** "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. Santa Cruz County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers enrolled as many children in their homes as they would like, and if not, what prevented them from doing so.

Data Collection

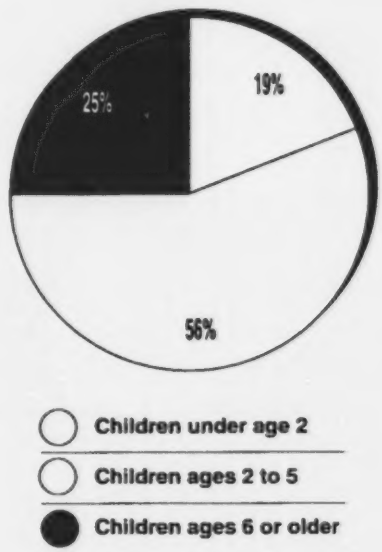
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back those providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Sixty-nine percent (n=154) of the interviews were completed in English, and thirty-one percent were completed in Spanish (n=70). There were no differences between large and small home with respect to the language of the interview. Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 224 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for nearly two thousand (1,959) children, three-fifth of whom (60 percent; n=1,184) were cared for in large homes, and the remainder (40 percent; n= 775) in small homes. As indicated in Figure 1, three-quarters of the children (75 percent; n=1,467) were five years old or younger. More than half (56 percent) of the children in home-based care were between the

Figure 1. Santa Cruz County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



ages of two and five, one quarter (25 percent) were school-age children, and the remainder (19 percent) were infants and toddlers.
Most providers cared for mixed-age groups. Sixty-nine percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 94 percent were paid to care for children ages two to five, and 63 percent were paid to care for school-age children. Twenty-two percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 25 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 61 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. Large-home providers were more likely to report caring for school-age children than were small-home providers.[i] As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children overall on a weekly basis, as well as more children in each age group, than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[ii]

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). This finding suggests that the licensed capacity in the county was larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 3,506 slots in Santa Cruz County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 3,192 children enrolled in licensed home care. This estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and of the distribution of small and large family child care homes in the county. Our estimate may be low, however, due to the timing of our data collection in the spring before Migrant Head Start Programs were in operation for the May-November agricultural season. These programs, the majority of which are family child care homes, serve approximately 500-800 children per year.

Providers were asked if they had as many children enrolled in their homes as they would like. Three-fourths of the providers reported that their enrollment was at the desired level. The one-fourth of providers who would like to serve more children gave several reasons for this under-enrollment: no other families interested at the current time (39 percent); space not adequate for more children, or landlord will not permit expansion (28 percent); not able to hire an assistant to care for more children (20 percent); and licensing too difficult (seven percent). Large-home providers were more likely than small-home providers to report problems related to staffing.[iii]

Most providers worked long hours, with 49 hours per week being the median amount of time they reported offering direct care to children. Fifteen percent of providers worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only

Table 2. Santa Cruz County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared for Weekly by Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=125)	8	7.21	L01	L40	3.39	L41
Large-Home Providers (n=99)	14	12.92	.96	L91	6.86	3.19

three percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Nine percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, over three-quarters (76 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. Nearly one-third of the sample (32 percent) reported spending more than 15 hours per week on such tasks.

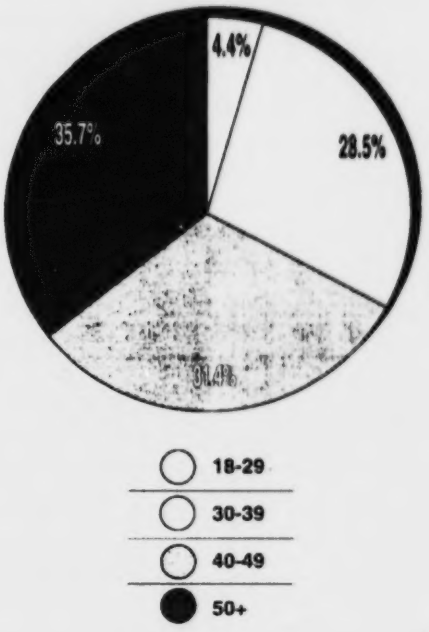
A substantial number of licensed providers in Santa Cruz County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Approximately half (52 percent) of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (61 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (46 percent).[iv] More than two-thirds of all providers (72 percent) participated in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (80 percent) were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (65 percent).[v]

Personal Characteristics of Providers [3]

Family child care providers in Santa Cruz County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only one of the providers interviewed for this study was male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 43 (see Figure 2).

Half of the providers (50 percent) in the sample were White, while the other half were

Figure 2. Santa Cruz County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



women of color (50 percent). The overwhelming majority of providers of color identified themselves as Latinas (86 percent). As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the provider population included a higher percentage of Latinas than is characteristic of the county's overall adult and child population (2000 U.S. Census). White providers had completed more formal education than providers of color;[vi] 30 percent of White providers, for example, had completed an associate degree or higher, compared to 12 percent of providers of color.

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Forty-two percent of providers spoke another language besides the one in which the interview was conducted, which was English for 69 percent and Spanish for 31 percent of the interviews. Almost half of those interviewed in English also spoke

Figure 3a. Santa Cruz County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

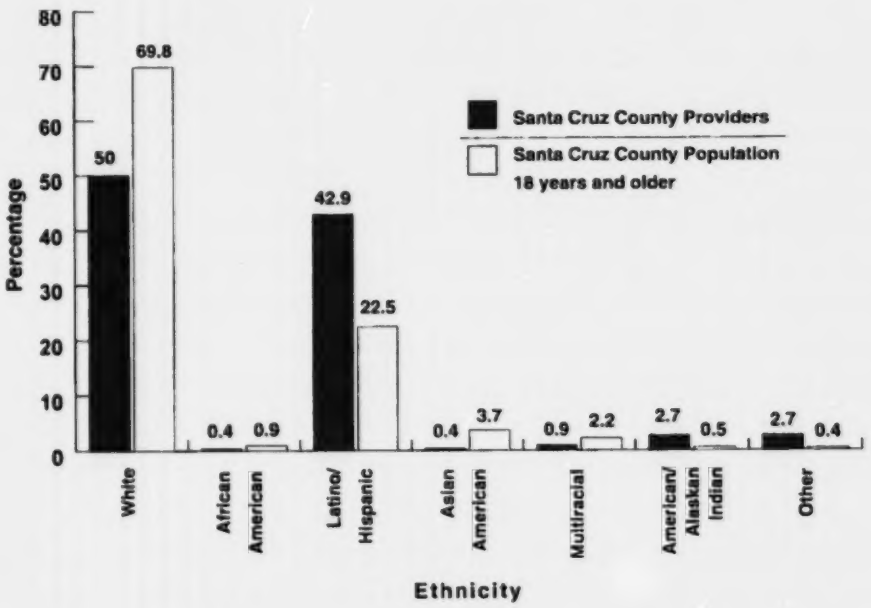


Figure 3b. Santa Cruz County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

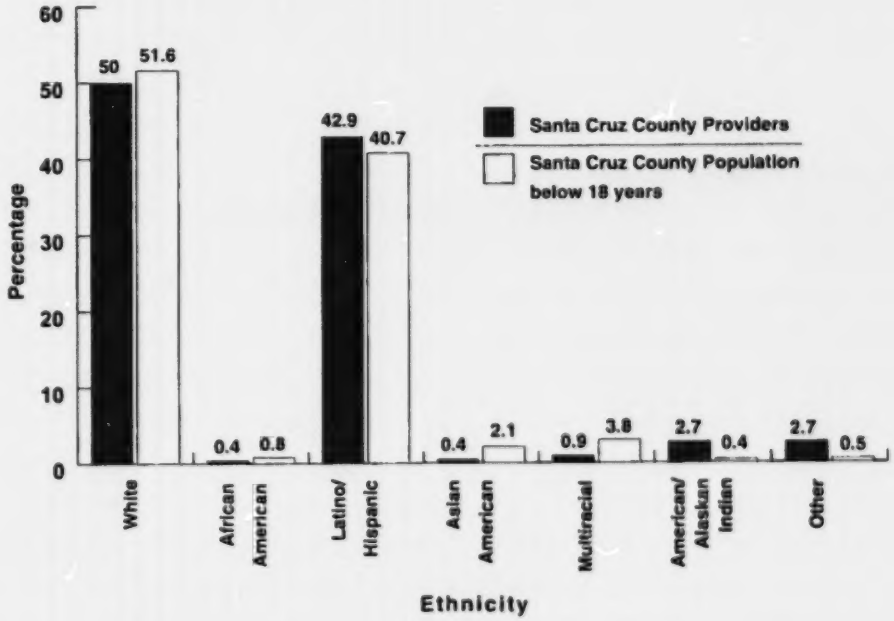
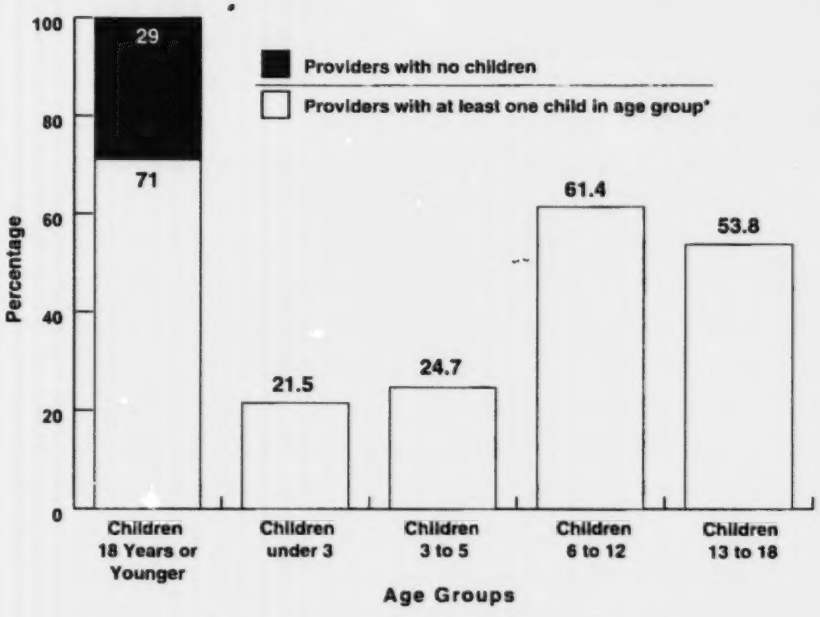


Figure 4. Santa Cruz County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentages add up to more than 100, since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

and 25 percent of single parents had children five years old or younger. Providers with a partner (76 percent) were more likely to be parents or guardians than providers who were single (55 percent).[vii]

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become a licensed provider, the State of California requires prospective family child care providers to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own.

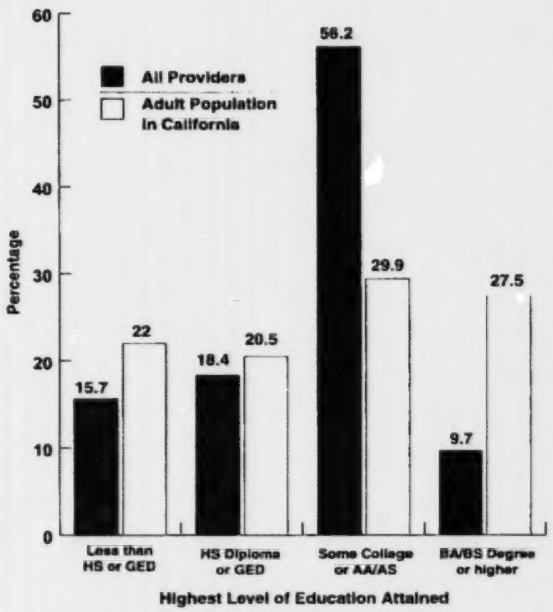
Spanish. Seventy-five percent of providers spoke to children in English, 43 percent spoke to children in Spanish, and one percent spoke to children in another language.

Over three-fourths of the providers (80 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Seventy-one percent of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (32 percent) or two children (40 percent). Nearly half (46 percent) of the providers had children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 4. Fifty-five percent of single providers were parents,

Table 3. Santa Cruz County: Highest Level of Education Completed by Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	15.7	34
HS Diploma or GED	18.4	40
Some college	47.4	103
AA/AS degree	8.8	19
BA/BS degree	8.8	19
MA/MS	.9	2
Total	**100.0**	**217**

Figure 5. Santa Cruz County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in California



Two-thirds (66 percent) of family child care providers in the sample had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3). Providers in Santa Cruz County had completed high school or a GED only (18.4 percent) at roughly the same rate as the overall adult population of California (20.5 percent), and had completed some college or an associate's degree at higher rates (56.2 percent) than California adults (29.9 percent) (Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census). (See Figure 5). Ten percent of providers in the sample had earned a college degree or higher degree, compared to 27.5 percent of adults in the state as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were as likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in California.

Among all providers, 57 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. As indicated in Figures 6a, b and c:

- more than half of all providers (54 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- nearly one-fifth of all providers (18 percent) had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;

Figure 6a. Santa Cruz County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers

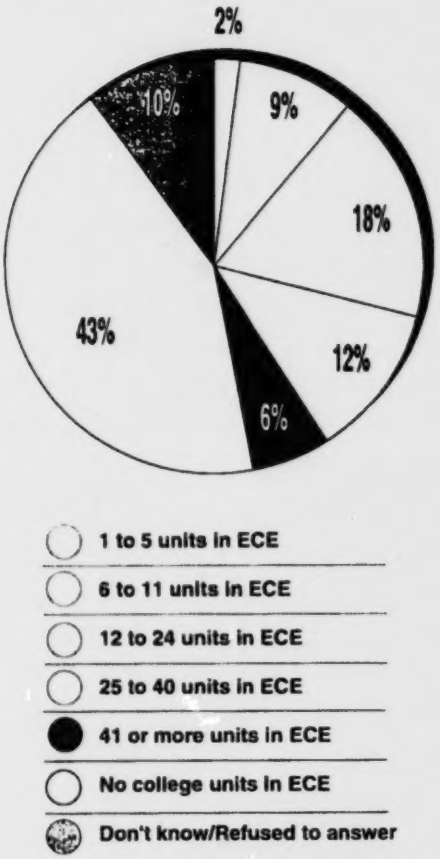


Figure 6b. Santa Cruz County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

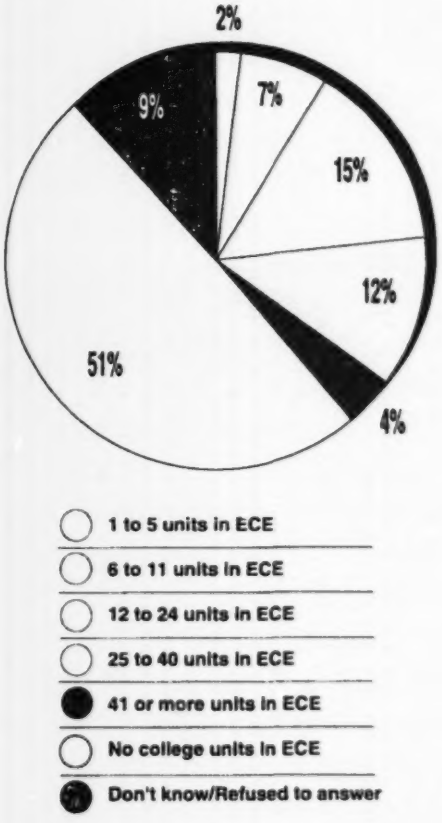
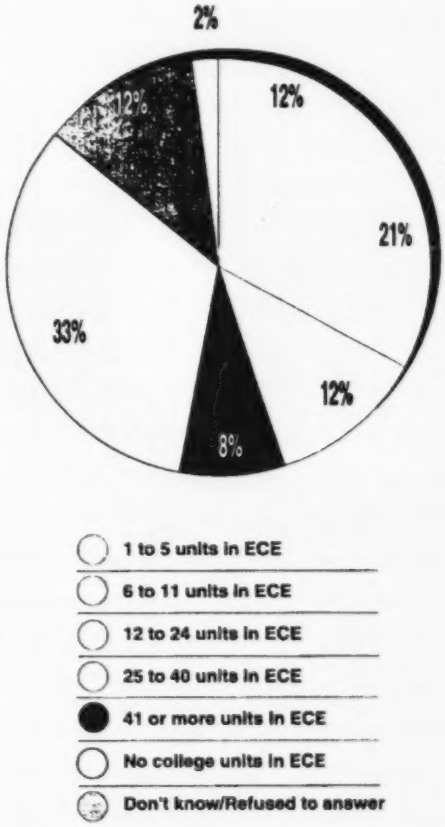


Figure 6c. Santa Cruz County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



- nearly one-fifth of all providers (18 percent) had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 66 percent of providers who had received some college-level education, 85 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the eleven percent of providers who had graduated from college and completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, three-quarters had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers, 17 providers (8 percent) had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Nine providers (4 percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Seven percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year, and more than four-fifths of these received college credit for these courses.

Many providers in Santa Cruz County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college

credit. For example, 65 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 71 percent reported engaging in more than 20 hours of such training. Forty percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with forty percent of those providers reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Forty-five percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Most providers in Santa Cruz County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 16 of the 224 providers (7 percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Twenty-three providers (10 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

Santa Cruz County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 9.4 years in their home businesses; twelve percent of the sample had been working as family child care providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (8 years) than large-home providers (11 years).[viii] Small-home providers (12 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (2 percent) to have been operating a child care business for a year or less.[ix] White providers averaged greater tenure (12.6 years) than providers of color (6.3 years).[x] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure (10 years) than those who rented their homes (6 years).[xi]

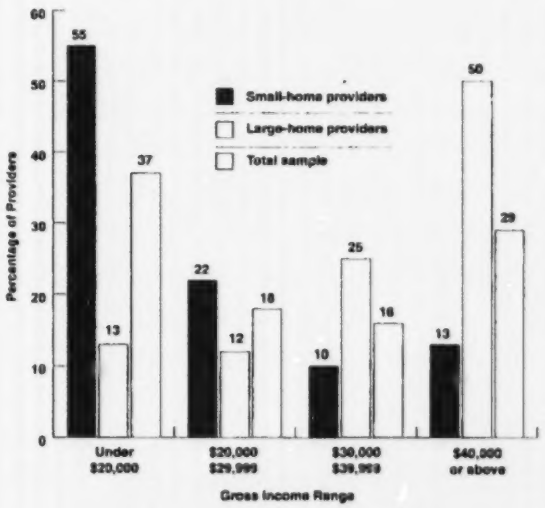
Economic Status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample did not provide information about their household income or gross earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings from child care ranging from $20,000 to $24,999 per year, while large-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $35,000 to $39,999.[xii] The average gross income for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $25,000 and $25,999.

Only one-half of the providers in the sample reported net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred to operate a child care businesses in one's home. The median net income was $7,000, but given the low response rate, little can be inferred from this number. Small-home providers reported average net earnings of $6,429 compared to $11,891 for large-home providers. Starting salaries for K-12 teachers, who typically have more education but work a much shorter day and year, averaged $32,001 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in Santa Cruz County were $48,634 and high-end earnings were $69,915. Over one-third of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year, and a little over a quarter reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more (see Figure 7).

Among the 78 percent of providers who reported household income and earnings, seventy percent lived in households with two or more adults contributing to their household income, with two adult earners

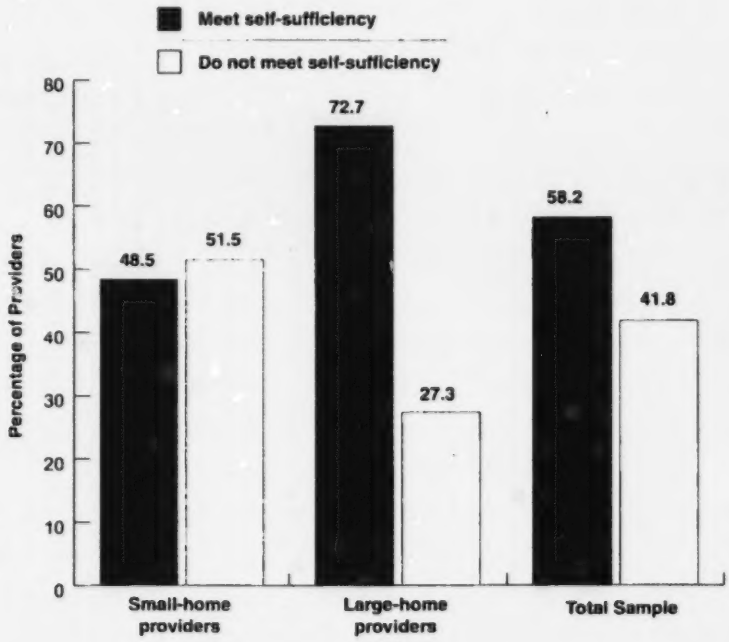
Figure 7. Santa Cruz County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



being the most common arrangement. Small-home providers reported living in households with an average annual income between $35,000 and $39,999, while large-home providers reported living in households with a higher average annual income, ranging between $45,000 and $49,999.[xiii] Sixty-six percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[5] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the Santa Cruz County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Two-fifths (42 percent) of providers in Santa Cruz County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 8). Age influenced self-sufficiency; older providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency.[xiv] Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers. [xv]

Figure 8. Santa Cruz County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard



Approximately three-quarters (77 percent) of the providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 60 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Small-home providers (26 percent) were more likely to be renters than were large-home providers (14 percent).[xvi] Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,367. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $1,170. These payments are higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Fewer than one-fourth (21 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 9). Among those who had saved, the mean contribution toward retirement was approximately $4,087.

Twenty-seven percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 10). Of the 73 percent of insured providers, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Thirty percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and only 8.7 percent were covered through a government program. Large-home providers were more likely to be covered by a private health insurance plan than small-home providers.[xvii] The majority of providers' children (95 percent) were also insured; fifteen percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not

Figure 9. Santa Cruz County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

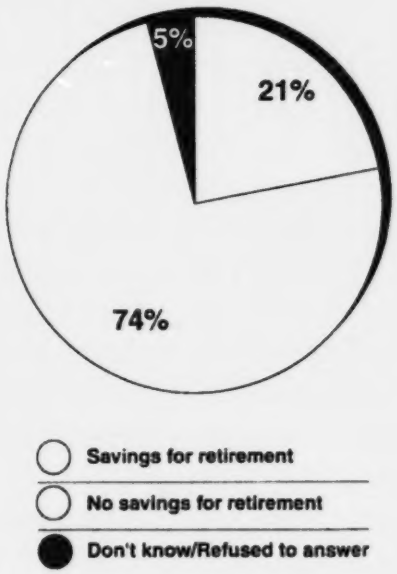
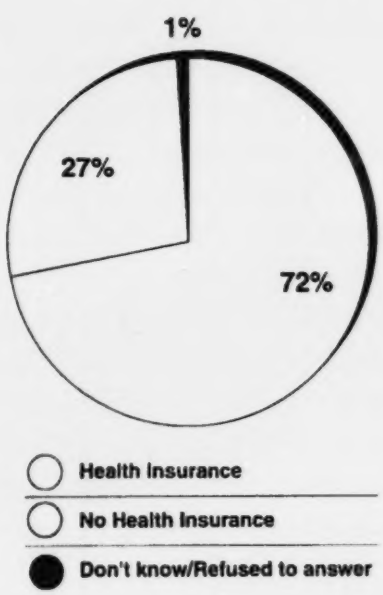


Figure 10. Santa Cruz County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



currently covered by health insurance, 18 percent had been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

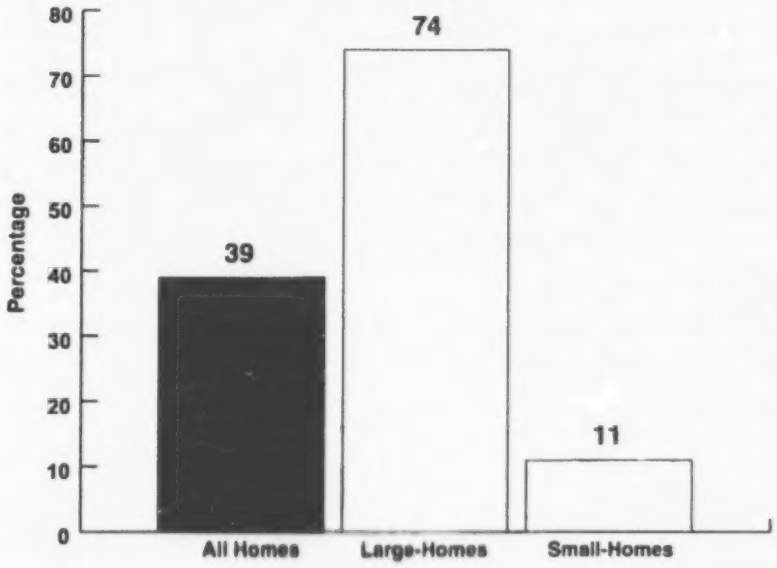
Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Thirty-nine percent of the 224 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=87) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 11). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (74 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (11 percent) to employ assistants.[xviii] Large homes also hired more assistants (1.9), on average, than did small homes (1.3).[xix] Approximately half (48 percent) of those homes employed one assistant, approximately one third (32 percent) employed two assistants, and 20 percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for family child care assistants was 2.9 years.

Among homes that reported employing assistants, assistants worked an average of 23 hours per week. The median wage for assistants was $8.32 per hour, with twenty percent earning $6.50 an hour or less, and only 23 percent earning $10.00 per hour or more. The vast majority of assistants (92 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Assistants in small homes (22 percent) were more likely than their counterparts in large homes (7 percent) to receive other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.[xx]

In addition to paid assistants, 51 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Approximately half of these providers (51 percent) paid their helpers. Providers reported a median hourly wage of $8.00 for substitutes; approximately one-third paid $9.00 per hour or more, while one-third paid $7.00 per hour or less.

Figure 11. Santa Cruz County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



Conclusion

Family child care providers in this Santa Cruz County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women, and most were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care in their homes for several years, yet their child care earnings were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, two-fifths of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

Two-thirds of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 57 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook and Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in Santa Cruz County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the child care providers of Santa Cruz County for their willingness to participate in this survey and for their dedication to children and families. A special thank you to the Child Development Resource Center, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, the Santa Cruz County Children & Families Commission, and the Santa Cruz Child Care Planning Council for providing information about licensed home-based providers in the county and for guidance in preparing this report.

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1 Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2 Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

3 For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

4 Note: A quarter of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 10 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Santa Cruz County.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$X^2(1)=6.43$, $p<.05$
ii	$t(150)=-10.42$, $p<.001$
iii	$X^2(1)=6.14$, $p<.01$
iv	$X^2(1)=4.73$, $p<.05$
v	$X^2(1)=5.48$, $p<.05$
vi	$t(222)=5.19$, $p<.0001$
vii	$X^2(1)=7.52$, $p<.01$
viii	$F(1,221)=8.09$, $p<.005$
ix	$X^2(1)=7.84$, $p<.01$
x	$t(222)=6.23$, $p<.0001$
xi	$t(95)=-3.47$, $p<.001$
xii	$t(157)=-6.75$, $p<.001$
xiii	$t(168)=-3.95$, $p<.001$
xiv	$t(129)=2.53$, $p<.05$
xv	$X^2(1)=9.57$, $p<.01$
xvi	$X^2(1)=4.97$, $p<.05$
xvii	$X^2(1)=12.38$, $p<.001$
xviii	$X^2(1)=90.96$, $p<.00001$
xix	$t(37)=-3.45$, $p<.01$
xx	$X^2(1)=5.00$, $p<.03$

California Child Care
WORKFORCE STUDY

Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Santa Clara County
California Child Care Workforce Study

A joint effort by
The Center for the Child Care Workforce
The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
The Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley

An important first step toward more effectively addressing the complexities of child care—both as a vital service for families, and as an employment setting for workers—is to develop a detailed picture of the child care workforce. The current study looks at family child care provider demographics, professional preparation, length of time in the field, wages and benefits in eight Northern California counties, and identifies issues that require further attention. We hope that this data can contribute to defining more effective ways to recruit and retain a skilled child care workforce throughout the state. The following report concerns Santa Clara County. Reports for other counties are available at www.ccw.org.

PS 031569

Introduction

Every day, most babies, toddlers and preschoolers in California rely on child care teachers and providers to help them feel secure in the absence of their parents, while the parents are at work or engaged in a training program or other pursuits. As a society, we call upon the child care workforce to deliver healthy, well-adjusted five-year-olds who are ready to succeed at the more formal challenges of elementary education. We also ask child care workers to ensure that elementary-school children spend their before- and after-school time in healthy, safe and nurturing environments.

Child care providers and teachers are responsible not only for the physical safety of their young charges, but for facilitating the remarkable opportunities for emotional, cognitive and social development that are present in every young child in their care. To succeed at their jobs, these workers are required to be knowledgeable and keen observers of young children, critical thinkers capable of building and maintaining sensitive and individualized relationships, competent organizers able to create a supportive group learning environment, and in many cases, masters of the financial and management skills necessary to maintain a business.

While the critical shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers pervades the public consciousness, the "other" staffing shortage—an insufficient pool of workers to care for and educate young children prior to kindergarten, and older children before and after school—seldom registers such public awareness. Yet the question of who will teach our children is as pressing (if not more so) at the preschool level, and before and after school, as it is for K-12 classrooms. The average rate of departure from child care jobs is 30 percent per year, four times greater than the seven percent departure rate of elementary school teachers (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). At all grade levels, low pay and lack of prestige influence teachers' and providers' decisions to leave their jobs or discourage them from entering the field in the first place. But at the preschool level and in before- and after-school care, teachers with comparable education and training to elementary school teachers earn approximately half as much, work a longer year, and receive fewer benefits (Whitebook & Bellm, 1999).

A crisis in the quality of care and education for young children both reflects and exacerbates this staffing shortage. Caregiver skills and consistency emerge repeatedly in research as the key determinants of high-quality care (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Over the past 30 years, research has documented the mediocre quality of many programs, as well as the importance of child-related college-level education and training for home-based providers and for center-based teachers and directors (Keyserling, 1972; Coelen, Glantz & Calore, 1979; *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). In 1990, for example, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* clearly documented that high staff turnover was related to low-quality services and negative consequences for children in center-based care (Whitebook et al., 1990). In 1995, the *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care* study identified the relationship between providers' training and income, and the quality of the care they offered (Kontos et al., 1995).

Increasingly, those who are concerned with expanding and improving child care services recognize that the size and qualifications of the child care workforce in large measure determine the availability and quality of care in a given community. Efforts to improve the financing and funding of services, and to increase

the training and retention of child care workers, require detailed and reliable information about the numbers and demographic characteristics of center-based staff and home-based providers and assistants. The need for an accurate count of the workforce and an assessment of its qualifications has arisen repeatedly over the last year as local, state and federal policy makers have developed initiatives to address the crisis in child care staffing.

To this end, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has provided support to our agencies to gather information on wages, qualifications and tenure of all licensed center staff and family home providers in eight California counties: Alameda, Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. Our goal is to collect this information on an ongoing basis statewide. Below are findings for licensed family child care providers and their assistants in Santa Clara County, based on interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2001.

Licensed Family Child Care in California:

Many providers care for their own children, as well as children from other families, in their own homes. When an individual cares for children from more than one unrelated family, the California Department of Social Services requires that the provider obtain a license to provide child care services.

In order to receive a family child care home license, providers must meet a number of requirements. These include:

- Fingerprint, criminal background and California Child Abuse Central Index clearances for everyone over 18 living in the home;
- 15 hours of training on preventative health practices, which must include pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; the recognition, management and prevention of infectious diseases; and the prevention of childhood injuries; and
- Home inspection by someone from the licensing agency to ensure that it meets basic health and safety requirements.

There are also restrictions on both the number of children that can be cared for in a licensed family child care home and the staff/child ratios for these providers. Family child care homes in California can be licensed as either small or large. The number of allowable children in small and large homes includes children under age 10 who live in the licensee's home. The license for small homes allows providers to serve up to eight children if two of them are of school age (over six years old) and no more than two are infants (0-24 months). (Alternatively, if small-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to six children, three of whom can be infants.) Large family child care homes can serve up to 14 children if at least two of them are of school age, and no more than three are infants. (Alternatively, if large-home providers do not care for school-agers, they can care for up to 12 children, four of whom can be infants.) Large-home providers must also have an assistant.

According to the 2001 California Child Care Portfolio, there were over 32,200 family child care homes in operation in the state in 2000. Family child care homes make up 35 percent of all of the licensed child care spaces (commonly referred to as "slots") in the state.

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Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County, the heart of Silicon Valley, is known for its high technology industry and also for the high cost of housing. Many child care providers, both in centers and in homes, have closed down because of rising rents and the difficulty of retaining low-paid staff in a high-cost-of-living community. In addition, hard times in the technology industry have recently led to sudden drops in enrollment, making it challenging for many providers to remain in business (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network [CCCRRN], 2001). The county experienced a 12 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, and currently is home to nearly 1.7 million people, many of whom depend on child care services:

- 60 percent of the 330,451 children under 14 have working parents[1];
- 56 percent of the 143,338 children 0-5 have working parents[1];
- 14 percent of children 0-5 live in poverty; and
- 14 percent of families with children 0-5 are headed by a single parent (CCCRRN, 2001).

The fluctuations of Silicon Valley's economy have had an enormous impact on Santa Clara County's child care system. Between 1998 and 2000, despite population growth, the actual number of homes decreased by approximately 10 percent, although the percentage of spaces for children increased by six percent. Seventy-two percent of parents' child care requests to resource and referral agencies are for family child care homes (CCCRRN, 2001).

To improve the quality of care and to offer providers incentives to stay in the field, advocates have worked with the Santa Clara County Children and Families Commission to launch the CARES (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability) program, which provides financial incentives to family child care providers and center-based teaching staff who meet certain educational requirements and remain on the job. The CARES program was not in operation, however, at the time these data were collected. Several family child care networks in Santa Clara County also offer support to local providers.

Study Design

The Sample

According to the local resource and referral agencies, there were 1,315 licensed family child care providers in Santa Clara County as of spring 2001. Originally, we hoped to conduct a census or official survey of every provider in the licensed home-based population. But due to the size of the provider population and the related costs of data collection, we instead randomly selected a sample or subset of the population to survey.

Random sampling is the best way to obtain a sample that is representative of the entire population, and is a process that insures that each provider has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. In order to be representative of a population, a sample must also be sufficiently large to capture diversity among the group. For survey research, a sample representing 10 percent of the population is considered to be the minimum in order to make inferences about the larger population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). By the standards of survey research, we have reached a sufficiently large proportion of the population (27 percent of the county provider population; n=358), and can report with a 95 percent confidence level that our sample results are within a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points. In other words,

our sample may deviate 4.4 percentage points in either direction from the makeup of the total population. The margin of error in our sample was 5.5 percent for small-home providers and 7.4 percent for large-home providers.

In order to insure a sufficient sample size, we randomly selected 600 family child care providers (46 percent of the county's provider population) for possible inclusion in the study. Of these, 358 providers (60 percent of the 600) participated, representing 27 percent of all licensed providers in Santa Clara County. Small homes comprised two-thirds (65 percent) of the sample (n=232), with large homes (35 percent or n=126) making up the balance, closely representing the distribution of small and large homes in the county's overall provider population. All findings reported are for the full sample, except in those instances where providers of large and small homes differed significantly along a particular dimension. See Table 1 for a description of participation and refusal rates.

Survey Instrument

The instrument was adapted from the Family Child Care Provider Income and Working Conditions Survey developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, which has been used in numerous workforce studies over the last decade. Questions for all counties focused on:

- provider demographics, including age, gender, marital/partner status, numbers and ages of children, ethnicity, and language skills;
- career preparation, continuing education, and career longevity;
- business characteristics, including numbers and ages of children served, participation in government programs, staff tenure, wages, hours worked, and benefits for staff assistants and substitutes; and
- economic status, including child care earnings, other household income and benefits, and rent/mortgage costs.

Table 1. Santa Clara County: Family Child Care Providers' Participation and Refusal Rates

	Number	Percentage of county	Percentage of contacted homes
Santa Clara County licensed homes	1,315	100.0	n/a
Recruited for sample	600	45.6	100.0
Completed interview	358	27.2	59.7
Refused to participate	86		14.3
Out of business	42		7.0
Communication barrier	15		2.5
Unresolved number*	62		10.3
Unavailable, no contact made	5		0.8
Did not complete	27		4.5
Other	5		0.8

* "Answering Machine," "No Answer," "Busy Signal," "Wrong Number," or "Telephone Disconnected."

Advocates and program operators from participating counties also provided feedback on the survey questions and were permitted to add up to two county-specific questions. Santa Clara County representatives specifically requested information about whether providers enrolled as many children in their homes as they would like, and if not, what prevented them from doing so.

Data Collection

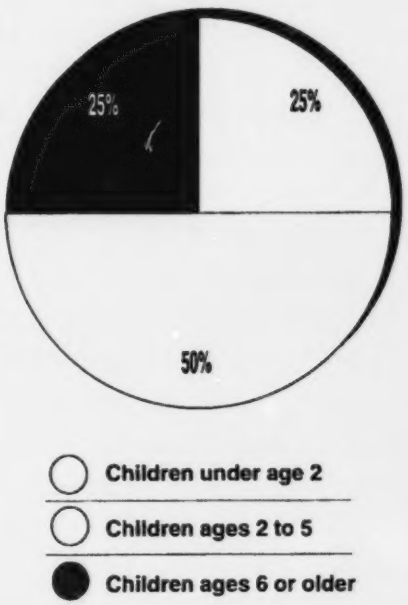
Field Research Corporation (FRC), a public opinion research firm, conducted the interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enabled interviewers to read questions from a computer screen and directly enter the responses into a computer file as the interview progressed. The CATI system insured accuracy and consistency in asking the questions and in entering the data.

Spanish- and English-speaking FRC interviewers were trained on the purpose of the survey, the characteristics of child care providers, and the study protocol. Interviewers made an initial attempt during the work day to contact providers, and when necessary, called them during the evening or weekend. Spanish-speaking interviewers also called back those providers who asked to complete the interview in Spanish. Eighty-four percent (n=302) of the interviews were completed in English, and sixteen percent were completed in Spanish (n=56). Interviewers terminated efforts after eight unsuccessful attempts at contacting the provider. Completed interviews took an average of 11.2 minutes to conduct.

Characteristics of Children Served and Hours of Operation

In a typical week, the 358 family child care providers in our sample received payment for caring for nearly three thousand (2,804) children, approximately half of whom (49 percent; n= 1,384) were cared for in large homes, and the remainder of whom (51 percent; n= 1,420) were cared for in small homes. As indicated in Figure 1, three-quarters of the children (75 percent; n= 2,103) were five years old or younger. Approximately half of the children in home-based care were between the ages of two and five, while the remainder were evenly divided between infants/toddlers and school-age children.

Figure 1. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Children of Varying Ages Family Child Care Providers are Paid to Care for in a Typical Week



Most providers cared for mixed-age groups. Seventy-seven percent of all providers were paid to care for infants and toddlers, 89 percent were paid to care for children ages two to five, and 55 percent were paid to care for school-age children. Seventeen percent of providers were parents or guardians to children under the age of three, 26 percent were parents or guardians of children ages three to five, and 62 percent had children between the ages of six and twelve. As would be expected from their licensed capacity, large-home providers cared for more children on a weekly basis than did small-home providers (see Table 2).[i]

On average, large-home and small-home providers cared for fewer than the maximum number of children for which they were licensed (see Table 2). This finding suggests that the licensed capacity in the county was larger than the number of children actually enrolled in licensed care. According to figures from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, there was a licensed capacity in family child care of 13,256 slots in Santa Clara County in 2001, compared to our estimate of 11,352 children enrolled in licensed home care. This estimate was based on our findings of the average number of children in care, and of the distribution of small and large family child care homes in the county.

Providers were asked if they had as many children enrolled in their homes as they would like. Over two-thirds (69 percent) reported that their enrollment was at the desired level. Among the one-third of providers who would like to enroll more children, several reasons were given. These included: no other families interested in their program at the current time (25 percent); space not adequate for more children, or landlord will not permit expansion (15 percent); not able to hire anyone to assist in caring for more children (22 percent), and licensing too difficult (11 percent).

The majority of providers worked long hours, with 49 hours per week as the median number of hours they reported offering direct care to children. Twelve percent worked thirty-five hours or less each week, and only five percent worked 15 hours or less per week. Seven percent of providers reported spending more than 60 hours per week caring for children. In addition, over half of providers (54 percent) reported spending at least 10 hours a week performing such preparation tasks as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and setting up activities before children arrived and after they left. Approximately one quarter (26 percent) of the sample reported spending more than 15 hours a week on such tasks. Large-home providers spent significantly more time each week caring for children (51.5 hours on average) than did small-home providers (47.5 hours).[ii]

Table 2. Santa Clara County: Mean Number of Children in a Given Age Range Cared for Weekly by Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

	Maximum number of children licensed to serve	Mean number of children in care counting own children under 12 [2]	Provider's own children under 12	Children providers are paid to care for under age 2	Children providers are paid to care for ages 2 to 5	Children providers are paid to care for ages 6 or older
Small-Home Providers (n=232)	8	7.06	0.94	1.54	2.83	1.75
Large-Home Providers (n=126)	14	11.70	0.65	2.74	5.96	2.35

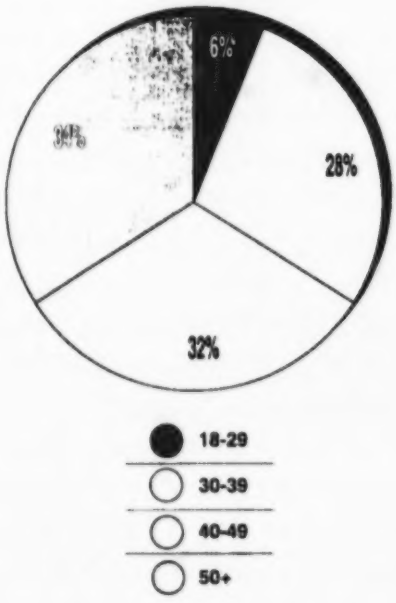
A substantial number of licensed providers in Santa Clara County served children whose care was subsidized by public dollars. Thirty-three percent of all providers reported serving at least one family that received publicly funded vouchers from the Department of Social Services or the Alternative Payment Program (APP). Large-home providers (48 percent) were more likely to serve families who received public vouchers than were small-home providers (25 percent).[iii] Almost two-thirds of all providers (65 percent) participated in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides resources to cover food costs for children in their care. Large-home providers (76 percent) were more likely to serve families in the Child and Adult Care Food Program than were small-home providers (57 percent).[iv]

Personal Characteristics of Providers[3]

Family child care providers in Santa Clara County, like their counterparts in other communities, were almost exclusively women. Only five of the providers interviewed for this study (2 percent) were male. The majority of providers were middle-aged, with an average age of 45 (see Figure 2). Small-home providers were younger, on average, (n=44) than large-home providers (n=47).

As indicated in Figures 3a and b, the provider population included a higher percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the overall adult population of Santa Clara County (2000 U.S. Census), but a lower percentage of people of color than is characteristic of the county's overall child population. In particular, the percentage of Asian American providers in the county is small in comparison with the child population of this ethnic group. Although White providers comprised the largest subgroup (48 percent), the majority were women of color.[v] (See figure 4).

Figure 2. Santa Clara County:
Age Range of Family Child Care Providers



There were no differences in educational levels achieved between providers of color and White providers.

Family child care providers in the county are also linguistically diverse. Fifty-one percent of providers spoke another language in addition to the interview language, which was English for 84 percent and Spanish for 16 percent of the interviews. Thirty percent of providers were bilingual in Spanish and English. According to the 2000 Supplemental Survey of the U.S. Census, 46 percent of adults in the county speak a language in addition to or other than English, and 17 percent are fluent in Spanish. Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog were among other languages spoken by Santa Clara County providers. Ninety-one percent of providers spoke to children in English, twenty-three percent spoke to children in Spanish, and four percent spoke to children in another language.

Figure 3a. Santa Clara County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population 18 Years and Over

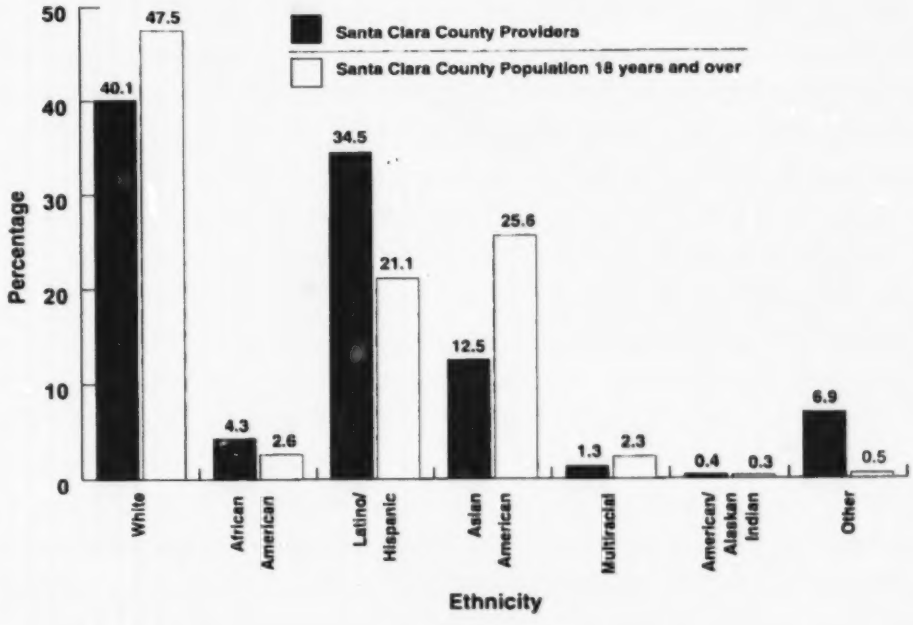


Figure 3b. Santa Clara County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers Compared to County Population Under 18 Years of Age

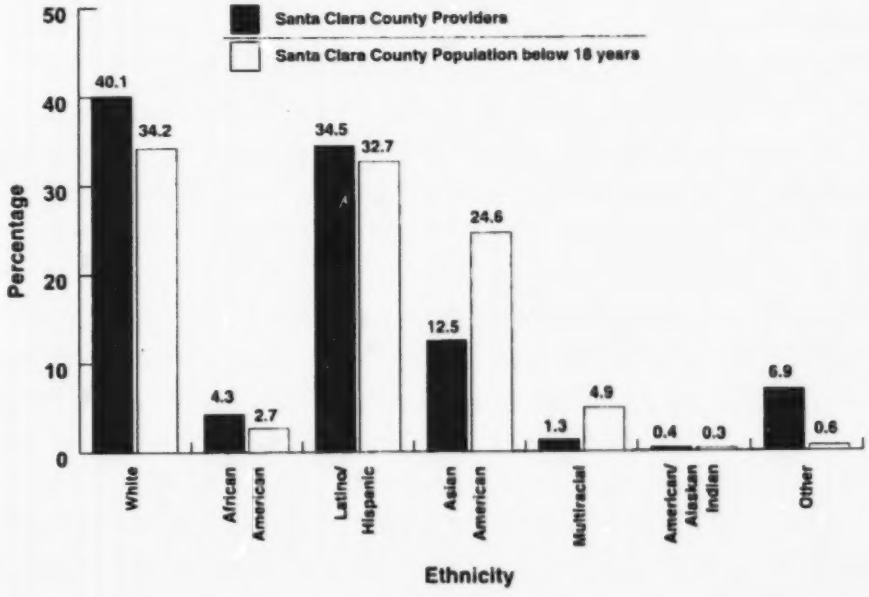


Figure 4. Santa Clara County:
Ethnicity of Family Child Care Providers in Large and Small-Homes

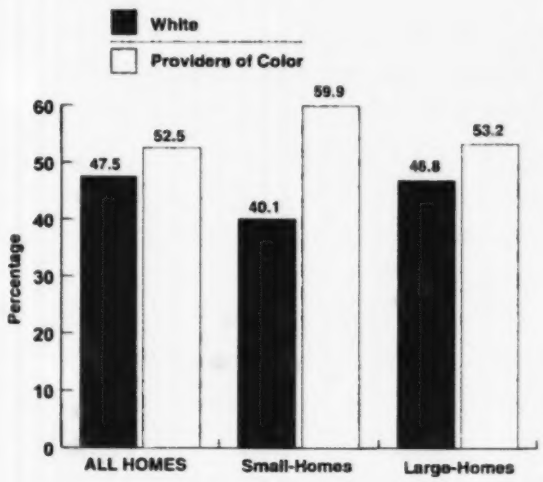
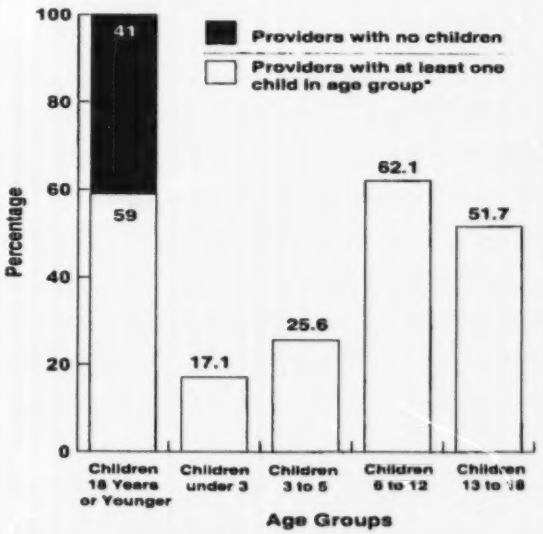


Figure 5. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Providers Who Are Parents or Guardians to Children 18 Years or Younger



* Percentages add up to more than 100, since providers could respond yes to more than one age group.

Four-fifths of the providers (80 percent) were married or living with a partner. The remainder identified themselves as single, divorced or widowed. Fifty-nine percent of the providers in the sample were parents or legal guardians to children under eighteen years of age. Most providers were parents or legal guardians to one (33 percent) or two children (40 percent). Forty-three percent of the providers had children five years old or younger, as indicated in Figure 5. Among single providers, thirty-nine percent were parents, and three percent had children five years old or younger. Providers operating large homes were more likely to be parents or guardians to children than were small-home providers.[vi]

Career Preparation and Continuing Education

To become a licensed provider, the State of California requires prospective family child care providers to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and to undergo a criminal records check. Providers are not required to complete any pre-service or ongoing child development or business training, but many providers seek this professional preparation on their own. Over two-thirds of providers in the sample (69 percent) had received some level of college education, from college-level courses with no degree up to and including an advanced degree (See Table 3).

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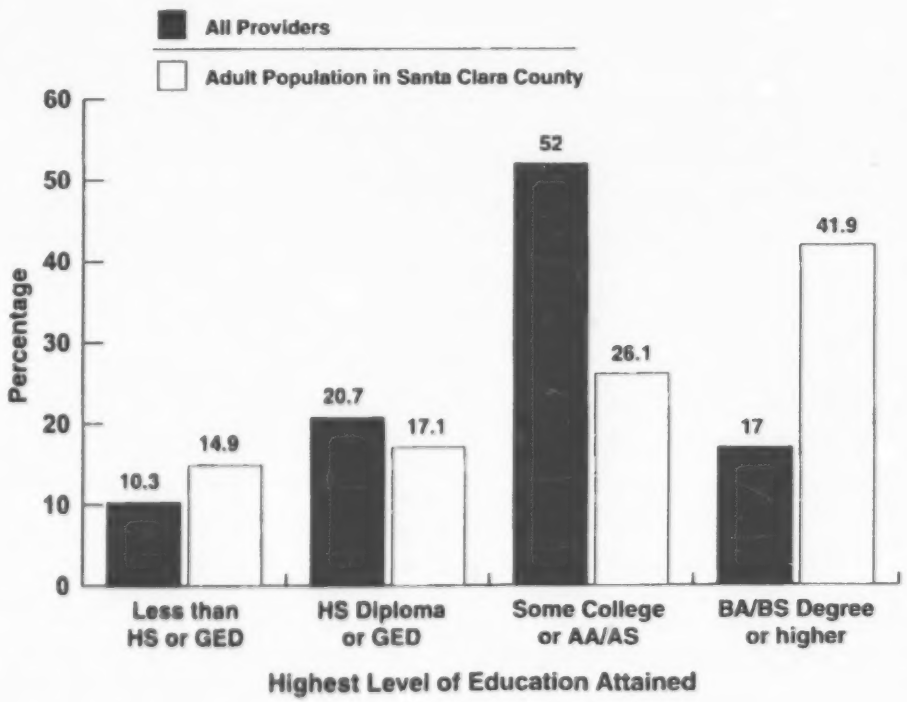
Providers had completed high school (90 percent) at roughly the same rates and some college or an associate's degree (52 percent) at higher rates than the adult population in the county (85 percent for high school, and 22 percent for some college or an associate's degree [Supplemental Survey, 2000 U.S. Census]). (See Figure 6). Approximately 17 percent of providers in the sample had earned a bachelor degree or higher, compared to 42 percent of adults in the county as of 2000. Thus, providers as a group were as likely to have completed high school, but less likely to have earned a college degree than the average adult living in the county.

Table 3. Santa Clara County: Highest Level of Education Completed by Family Child Care Providers

	% Total Sample	Total n
Less than HS or GED	10.3	36
HS Diploma or GED	20.7	72
Some college	42.2	147
AA/AS degree	9.8	34
BA/BS degree	14.4	50
MA/MS degree	2.0	7
Ph.D.	0.6	2
Total	**100.0**	**348**

Figure 6. Santa Clara County:
Highest Level of Education Attained by Family Child Care Providers Compared to Population over 25 in the County



Among all providers, 44 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development. Large-home providers were more likely to have taken a college course in early childhood education or child development than were small-home providers.[vii] As indicated in Figures 7a, b and c:

- among all providers, large-home child care providers were likely to have completed more units of college credit than small-home providers;[viii]
- nearly two-thirds of all providers (64 percent) had completed fewer than 12 or no units of early childhood education at the college level;
- 13 percent of providers had completed 12-24 units of early childhood education at the college level;
- 10 percent of providers had completed more than 24 units of early childhood education at the college level; and
- among the 69 percent of providers who had received some level of college education, 74 percent had completed courses in early childhood education or child development.

Among the 28 providers who had graduated from college and had completed more than 20 units of early childhood education, half had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Among all providers, four percent had earned degrees in early childhood education or child development. Eleven providers (3 percent) had earned an elementary or secondary teaching credential. Seven percent of providers reported taking business-related courses in the last year.

Many providers in Santa Clara County have engaged in early childhood education or business training that did not carry college credit. For example, 65 percent reported engaging in non-college-based early childhood education training at some time in their career, and of those, 61 percent reported engaging in 20 hours or more of such training. Large-home providers participated in more hours of training than small-home providers.[ix] For example, 74 percent of large compared with 52 percent of small home providers participated in 20 hours or more of training. Fifty-seven percent reported engaging in such training within the last 12 months, with fifty-one percent reporting one to 10 clock hours of training. Thirty-five percent also reported taking business-related, non-college training.

Figure 7a. Santa Clara County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by All Family Child Care Providers

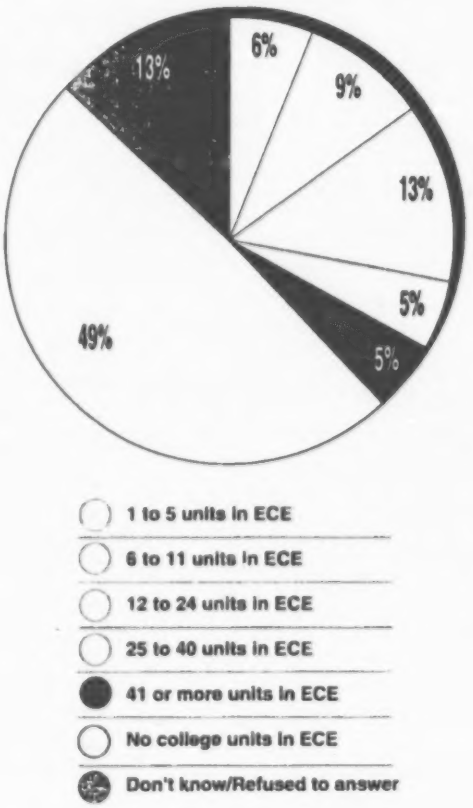


Figure 7b. Santa Clara County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Small-Home Family Child Care Providers

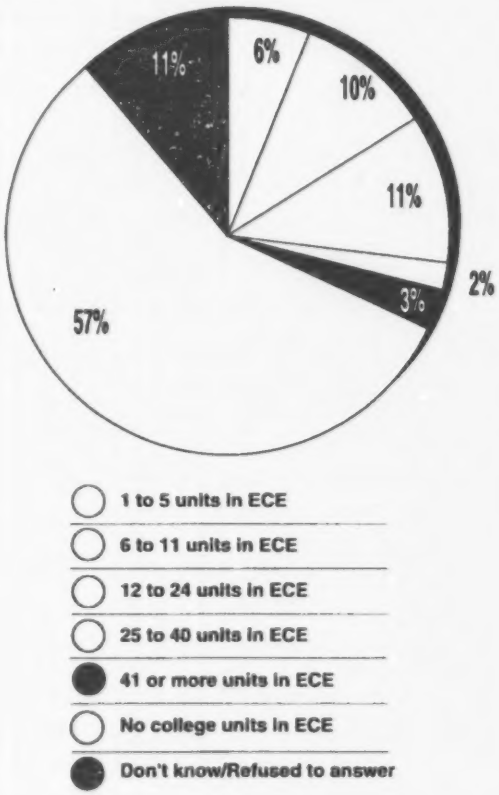
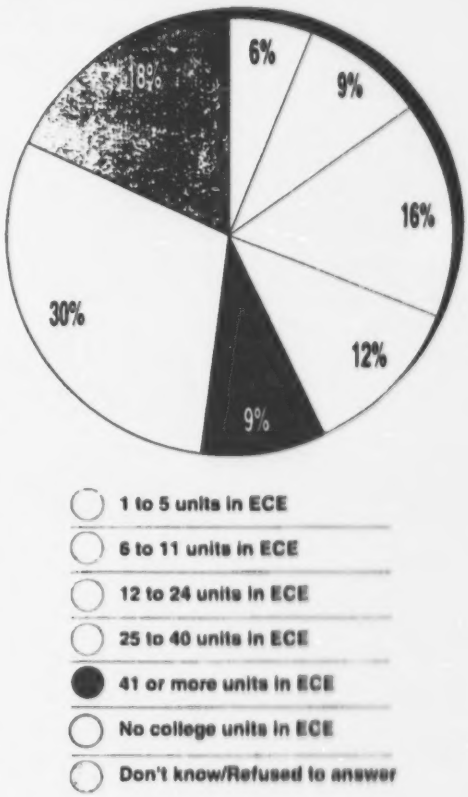


Figure 7c. Santa Clara County:
College Units in Early Childhood Education or Child Development Received by Large-Home Family Child Care Providers



Most providers in Santa Clara County had not completed a formal credential or accreditation program. Only 31 of the 358 providers (9 percent) had earned the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Forty-four providers (12 percent) reported that the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) had accredited their homes.

With respect to educational level, there were no differences between providers receiving public support and those who did not, underscoring the fact that public dollars in this sector of the workforce are not associated with higher professional preparation standards.

Career Longevity

Santa Clara County providers in this study were very experienced, having worked an average of 10.0 years in their home businesses; only 11.5 percent of the sample had been working as providers for a year or less. Small-home providers reported shorter tenure in family child care (8.4 years) than large-home providers (12.9 years). Small-home providers (6 percent) were also more likely than large-home providers (2 percent) to have been operating a child care business for a year or less. White providers averaged greater tenure (12.8 years) than providers of

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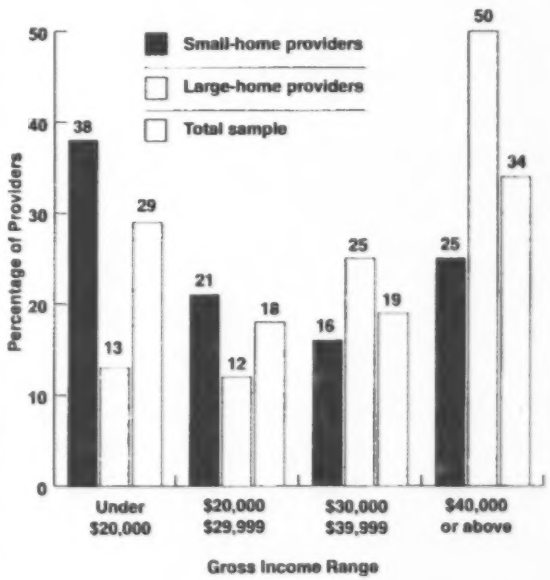
color (7.9 years).[x] Providers who owned their homes had longer tenure (10.5 years) than those who rented their homes (8 years).[xi] Tenure was also related to earnings from child care; those with one to five years of experience in family child care earned significantly less from their child care business than those with five to ten years and providers with ten or more years of experience.[xii]

Economic Status

Approximately one-quarter of the sample (27 percent) did not provide information about their household income, and two-fifths (40 percent) did not provide information about their gross earnings from child care. Among those who did, small-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $25,000 to $29,999 per year, and large-home providers reported average gross earnings ranging from $40,000 to $44,999.[xiii] Average gross earnings for all providers reporting child care income ranged between $30,000 and $34,999.

Thirty-one percent of providers did not provide information about their net earnings. Net earnings, which reflect the expenses incurred in operating a child care business in one's home, were also lower for small-home providers ($9,463) than for large-home providers ($19,088).[xiv] Starting salaries for K-12 teachers, who typically have more education but work a much shorter day and year, averaged $30,412 during the same period, while mid-range earnings for K-12 teachers in Santa Clara County were $58,501 and high-end earnings were $86,572. More than one-quarter (29 percent) of providers reported gross earnings of less than $20,000 per year, and one-third (36 percent) reported net earnings of less than $15,000 per year from their child care work. One-third reported gross earnings of $40,000 or more from child care (see Figure 8). Providers who had higher levels of education did not earn significantly more in their child care business than those with lower levels of education, nor did those who cared for children who received subsidized services earn more than those who cared only for non-subsidized children.

Figure 8. Santa Clara County:
Gross Income from Child Care Business for Family Child Care Providers



Among those who reported household income and earnings, 78 percent lived in households with two or more adults contributing to the household income, with two adult earners being the most common arrangement. Large-home providers reported living in households with a higher average annual income, between $50,000 and $54,999. Sixty percent of those providing financial information reported having income from other sources in addition to their child care business.

The self-sufficiency standard[14] is a measure of economic well-being based on size of household income and the number of adults contributing to it, the number and ages of children living in a household, and the wage needed within a given county to meet one's basic needs without public subsidies or private assistance (Pearce and Brooks, 2000). Providers were classified as self-sufficient if they met the Santa Clara County standard ensuring the minimum that heads of working families need to meet their basic needs. Twenty-nine percent of providers in Santa Clara County failed to meet the self-sufficiency standard (see Figure 9a). Providers were more likely to meet self-sufficiency if they owned their own homes (Figure 9b) and had higher gross earnings from their child care businesses.[xv] Large-home providers, who generally earned more from child care work, were more likely to meet self-sufficiency than small-home providers.[xvi]

Figure 9a. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Large- and Small-Home Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

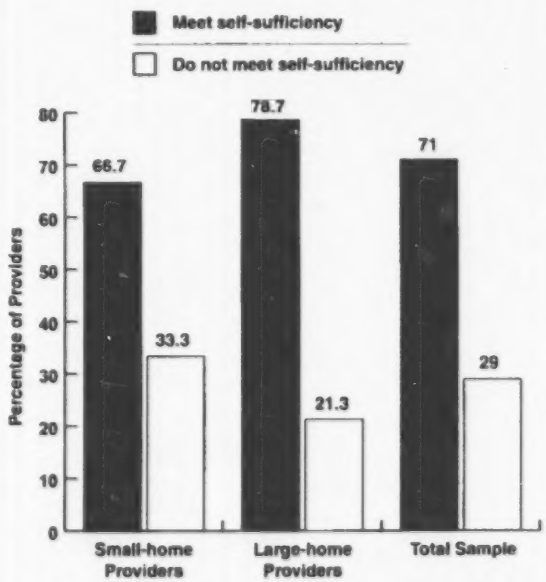
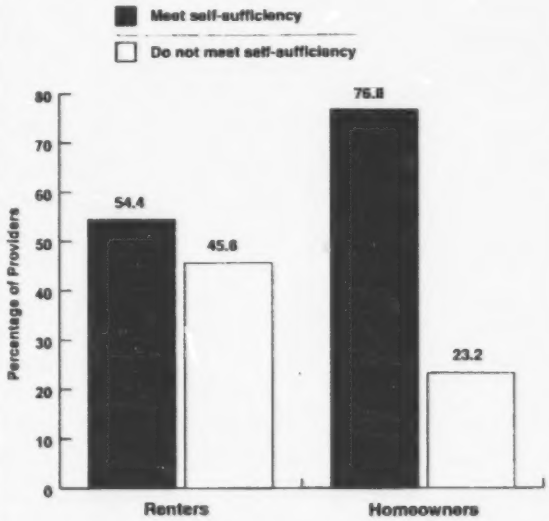


Figure 9b. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Renters/Homeowners Among Family Child Care Providers Who Meet Their County Self-Sufficiency Standard

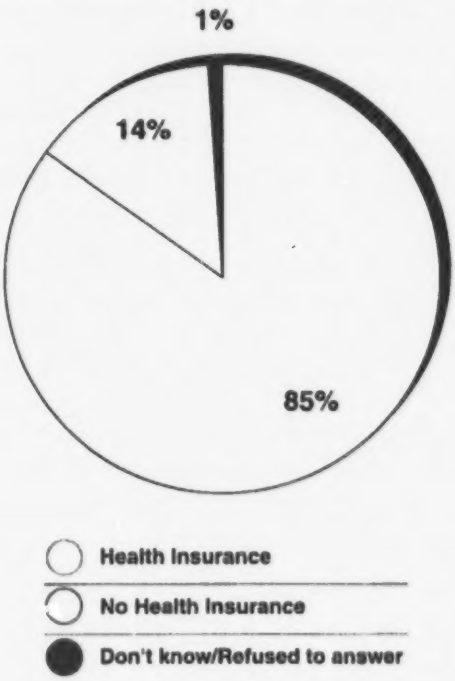


Three-quarters (74 percent) of family child care providers in our sample owned their own homes, compared to 60 percent of adults in the county as a whole (2000 U.S. Census). Providers paid an average monthly mortgage of $1,594. Among renters, the average monthly payment was $1,494. These payments are about $200-300 higher than the average rents in the county for a two-bedroom apartment (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2001). We do not know home size for providers, nor do these numbers reflect rising housing costs in the county for both rentals and home ownership, which may drastically limit the pool of potential new providers in the county.

Approximately one-third (36 percent) of the providers reported that they had saved money for their retirement in the preceding year (see Figure 10). Only two-thirds of those who had saved reported the amount of their contribution toward retirement, which averaged $7,501. Fourteen percent of providers reported that they were not currently covered by medical insurance or any other form of government or private health plan that covered all or part of their doctor bills or hospitalization should they require it (see Figure 11). Of the 85 percent that were covered, nearly two-thirds of insured providers (62 percent) were covered through a family member such as a spouse or partner. Thirty percent were covered through a private insurance plan, and only three percent were covered through a government program. The majority of providers' children (93 percent) were also insured; seven percent of providers reported that their children were covered through the Healthy Families program. Among providers who were not currently covered by health insurance, about 23 percent had been covered in the previous year but not in the current year.

Figure 10. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Have Savings for Retirement

Figure 11. Santa Clara County:
Family Child Care Providers' Health Insurance Status



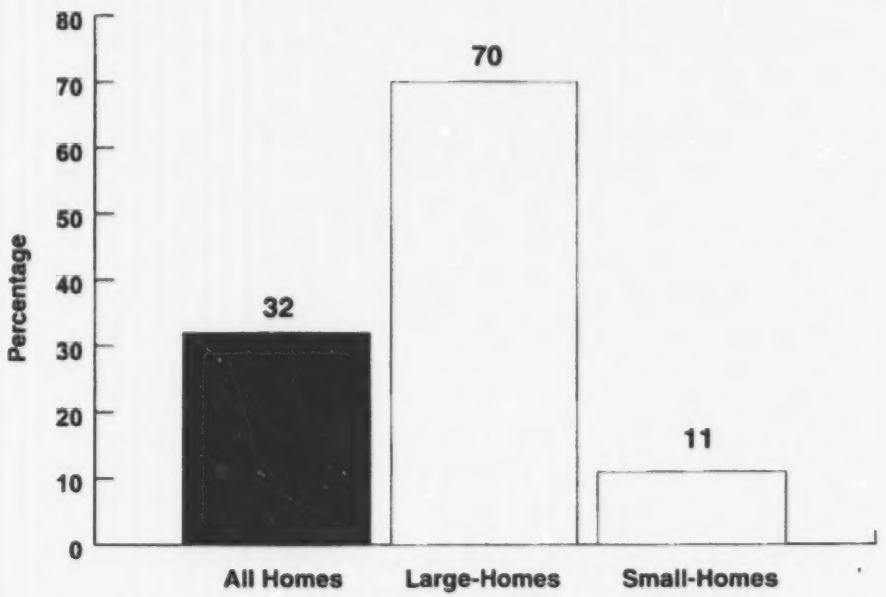
Family Child Care Assistants and Substitutes

Thirty-two percent of the 358 homes in our sample employed assistants (n=114) to help them in their work with children (see Figure 12). As would be expected due to size, and the legal requirement to hire assistants if enrollment is more than eight children, large homes (70 percent) were significantly more likely than small homes (11 percent) to employ assistants.[xvii] Homes hired 1.3 assistants on average. Nearly three-quarters (70 percent) of those homes employed one assistant, approximately one-third (30 percent) employed two assistants, and three percent employed three or more assistants. The average tenure for assistants working in large homes was 3.8 years, compared to 2.1 years for those employed in small homes.[xviii]

Among homes that reported employing assistants, assistants worked 29 hours per week on average. The mean wage for assistants was $8.15 per hour, with twenty-five percent earning less than $7.00 per hour and seven percent earning $11.00 per hour or more. The vast majority of assistants (86 percent) did not receive health coverage as part of their compensation package. Approximately one-third of assistants received other monetary benefits as a condition of employment, including partially or fully paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

In addition to paid assistants, 43 percent of providers reported having an arrangement with another adult to take care of the children in their homes when they were sick. Large-home providers (53 percent) were more likely to have paid substitutes when ill than small-home providers (38 percent).[xix] Over one-third of the providers (38 percent) paid these helpers. Providers reported a mean hourly wage of $8.94 for substitutes. Less than one-fifth (17 percent) of providers paid substitutes $10.00 per hour or more, while one-quarter paid them $6.00 per hour or less.

Figure 12. Santa Clara County:
Percentage of Family Child Care Providers Who Employed Assistants



Conclusion

Family child care providers in this Santa Clara County study, like their counterparts throughout the state, were predominantly women, and most were parents, often of young children. Most had been operating child care in their homes for several years, yet their child care earnings were low, particularly in light of their lengthy tenure in the field, their long work week, and in many cases, their educational attainment. Disturbingly, almost a third of providers lived in households with incomes lower than the minimum required to support their families.

Over two-thirds of providers had completed some level of college education. Despite not being required to participate in child-related training, 44 percent had completed specialized training in early childhood education at the college level. Providers with higher levels of education were not rewarded by increased earnings from their child care business or with higher reimbursement rates for caring for subsidized children.

Child care is a burgeoning, $5 billion industry in California, and a skilled and stable workforce is crucial to its success in helping parents seek and maintain employment, and in helping children maximize their learning potential. Typically, child care is viewed as a support service for working mothers or as a developmental program for children. Minimal recognition is given to the fact that child care also functions as a workplace for many mothers employed at low wages, and that this workforce is a fast-growing subgroup of the working poor in the state (National Economic Development and Law Center, 2001; Whitebook and Phillips, 1999). Child care employment exemplifies the growing polarization of wages between the wealthiest and poorest Americans, and an increasing dependency on the low-wage service sector to staff food service, health care, and education-related industries (Kasarda, 1996; Whitebook, 1999).

Most child care policy decisions emphasize child care as an essential support service for working parents, with little regard for the fact that child care employment also poses urgent and complex policy questions. There is a pressing need for public policies that address the complex factors contributing to the child care crisis facing many communities. Policy development should acknowledge both the perspective of parents seeking quality, affordable services, and the perspective of child care providers who strive to offer developmentally enhancing services to children while also meeting their own economic needs. Hopefully, data from this report will provide useful information to those planning and implementing initiatives targeted to improving child care jobs and services. Such policies would ideally reward providers for investing in their professional development and offer providers higher earnings, health care coverage, and retirement benefits, laying the foundation necessary to build and maintain a skilled and stable child care workforce in Santa Clara County and throughout the state.

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Acknowledgments

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Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Mirella Almaraz, Research Assistant
Joon Jo-Yung, Research Assistant
Laura Sakai, Ph.D., Consultant
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California at Berkeley

Shelley Waters Boots, Research Director
Irene Voisin, Research Associate
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Marci Young, Executive Director
Alice Burton, Senior Policy Researcher
Brian Duff, Survey Research Consultant
Kassin Laverty, Research Consultant
Dan Bellm, Editor
Center for the Child Care Workforce

E. Deborah Jay, Ph.D., President, CEO
Nandini Krishnaswamy, Research Associate
Field Research Corporation

Fran Kipnis, Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Endnotes

1. Note: Percentages of children with working parents from 1990 U.S. Census (2000 data not available by county at publication); child population numbers from 2000 Census.

2. Note: Technically, providers are not required to count children over the age of 10 who live with them in their license capacity. Therefore, we recognize that the mean number of children in care is a slight overestimate since it includes provider's own children between the ages of 10 and 12.

3. For information about family child care assistants, see the final section of this report.

4. Note: One-fourth of the sample did not provide income data, and thus we were not able to assess whether they were self-sufficient. In addition, 10 other providers were excluded from this analysis because the self-sufficiency standard was not available for families with more than 3 children.

To Reference This Report

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Voisin, I., Duff, B., Waters Boots, S., Burton, A., Young, M. (2002). *California Child Care Workforce Study. Family Child Care Providers and Assistants in Santa Clara County.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Tests of Significance

i	$t(226)=-10.62$, $p<.001$
ii	$t(348)=-2.56$, $p<.01$
iii	$X^2(1)=20.43$, $p<.001$
iv	$X^2(1)=11.05$, $p<.001$
v	$t(350)=-2.54$, $p<.012$
vi	$X^2(1)=15.25$, $p<.0001$
vii	$X^2(1)=14.65$, $p<.001$
viii	$t(129)=-3.98$, $p<.001$
ix	$t(216)=-2.48$, $p<.014$
x	$t(287)=5.55$, $p<.001$
xi	$t(344)=-2.37$, $p<.05$
xii	$F(3,229)=4.46$, $p<.01$
xiii	$t(231)=-4.86$, $p<.001$
xiv	$t(134)=-3.74$, $p<.0001$
xv	Home ownership $X^2(1)=10.69$, $p<.01$; gross income from child care $t(223)=2.37$, $p<.05$
xvi	$X^2(1)=3.95$, $p<.05$
xvii	$X^2(1)=129$, $p<.000001$
xviii	$t(97)=-2.76$, $p<.01$
xix	$X^2(1)=7.72$, $p<.005$

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